

THE ASYLUM

Quarterly Journal of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society

Volume I, Number 1

Summer, 1980

Welcome to the first issue of "The Asylum," finally born after nearly a year of labor pains. At the ANA Convention last year in St. Louis, about a dozen fellow bibliomaniacs gathered together for an informal dinner and agreed to form an organization for numismatic book and catalogue collectors. As we soon discovered, many of us have a tendency towards a "mania" in our book and catalogue collecting pursuits, especially those of us who are willing to pay outrageous prices in order to obtain some elusive book or catalogue. This proclivity was best expressed in a recent letter by John J. Ford, Jr., which stated, "Some men make fools of themselves over coins, others over women, but I've made a fool of myself trying to get a simple, paper-covered book!"

Therefore, we've entitled our group, "The Numismatic Bibliomania Society," and our quarterly publication, "The Asylum." The purpose will be several fold: We will, hopefully, enlighten, inform, and entertain. This will be an open forum for new information and research on numismatic literature. We welcome any articles or newsworthy items from any of you who would care to share them with our readers. In forthcoming issues, for example, there will be a complete listing of auction catalogues published by the Chapman brothers, together with rarity ratings and values. A similar listing of all of the Thomas Elder and Stack's sales has also been prepared. An article on counterfeit detectors will likewise appear in a future issue.

If you have any contributions, questions, or letters, please send your mail to your editors:

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Reprinted from the cover of Geoffrey Charlton Adams' auction sale, dated January 31, 1905.

Dear Sir: The present Sale to which we wish to call your attention deals entirely with a branch of collecting that we have but only touched upon in our past Sales, and in this connection we wish to make a few remarks. The gleaners in the numismatic fields are limited in number as compared with those that are earnest workers in the fields of book collecting, and it will always be so, for the "disease," if once acquired, seems to be beyond remedy as long as the collector has a sou marque to his name. Our old friend, Thos. Frognall Dibden, in his treatise on Bibliomaniacs, expresses this fact in the following choice sentiments: "In treating of the history of this disease, it will be found to have been attended with the remarkable circumstance, namely, that it has been almost entirely confined in its attacks to the male sex, and among these to people in the higher and middling classes of Society, while the artificer, labourer and peasant have escaped wholly uninjured. It has raged chiefly in palaces, castles, halls and gay mansions, and those things which in general are supposed not to be inimical to health, such as cleanliness, spaciousness and splendour, are only so many inducements towards the introduction and propagation of the Bibliomaniac. What renders it particularly formidable is that it rages in all seasons of the year and at all periods of human existence. The emotions of friendship or of love are weakened or subdued as old age advances; but the influence of this passion, or rather disease, admits of no mitigation, "it grows with our growth and strengthens with our strength," and is oftentimes "the ruling passion strong in death." This formidable arrangement was written in 1809 and was almost in the light of a prophesy, viewed as it is in the bright light of this Century, for there is not a corner of the earth but has its bibliomaniacs and bibliophiles, and the list is increasing each year with starting rapidity.

That this disease has been a long time in existence is also an established fact, for was not Moses a possessor of "a first edition" of the famous laws of the Hebrews, and up to the present day we are reasonably certain that the edition that he possessed is "out of print" and rare; but there are other first editions of other works that are within our reach, and those we can obtain, provided we have the price. In this catalogue will be found various books, etc., which we commend to your attention, assuring you that they, one and all, are worthy of more than passing glance, and while some cannot approach in grandeur to the contents of that book of Moses', yet some are more up to date and, perhaps, more useful, viewed in the light of modern times. At any rate, they are before you for inspection, so let it go at that. All books in new or sound second-hand condition unless otherwise stated.

Yours truly,
Geoffrey Charlton Adams

RARITY AND VALUE OF LARGE CENT LITERATURE

by John W. Adams

Almost all large cent collectors are interested in building a reference library. However, in marked contrast to the close scrutiny given to the coins themselves, no one has bothered to comment on the rarity and value of the literature in which we all share an interest. In order to fill this obvious void, I have reviewed and listed the major works on large cents. The literature is arranged alphabetically by author within descending categories of rarity.

Rarity 7. Only two special editions qualify for this elite category. Values assigned are necessarily speculative.

1. Chapman, S. H. THE UNITED STATES CENTS OF THE YEAR 1794. 1923 edition. More than 50 copies were printed, but all were recalled to correct numerous mistakes, many of which were repeated in the 1926 edition. Four fine plates. Value \$350.

2. Clapp, G. H. THE UNITED STATES CENTS OF THE YEARS 1798-1799. Ten presentation copies made, with leather binding and the normal two plates. Printed 1931. Value \$350.

Rarity 6.

1. Crosby, S. S. and Levick, J. N. T. THE CENTS OF 1793. Published with one superb plate in Volume III of the "American Journal of Numismatics", April, 1869. With 42 copies of this volume listed in institutions, I doubt that as many as 30 copies out of an original run of 100 are available to collectors. Value \$200.

2. Maris, Dr. Edward. VARIETIES OF THE COPPER ISSUES OF THE UNITED STATES MINT IN THE YEAR 1794. 1869 edition. One hundred copies printed but the survival rate is atrocious. Value \$250.

3. As above, 1870 edition. Same comments and value.

4. Newcomb, H. R. UNITED STATES COPPER CENTS 1816-1857. Special edition (leather-bound, thick paper, and interleaved). Twenty-five copies printed in 1944. Value \$300.

5. Andrews, F. D. AN ARRANGEMENT OF UNITED STATES COPPER CENTS, 1816-1857. 1881 edition distributed (narrowly) by the author. Value \$125.

Rarity 5.

1. Andrews, F. D. AN ARRANGEMENT OF UNITED STATES COPPER CENTS, 1816-1857. 1883 edition distributed by Scott & Co. Value \$60.

2. Newcomb, H. R. UNITED STATES COPPER CENTS 1816-1857. Special edition (leather-bound and thick paper). Seventy-five copies printed in 1944. Value \$150.

Rarity 4.

1. Chapman, S. H. THE UNITED STATES CENTS OF THE YEAR 1794. 1926 edition. Estimated 200 printed. Four fine plates. Value \$75.

2. Clapp, G. H. THE UNITED STATES CENTS OF THE YEARS 1798-1799. Regular 1931 edition. Ninety copies printed. Two fine plates. Value \$175.

3. Crosby, S. S. THE UNITED STATES COINAGE OF 1793, CENTS AND HALF CENTS. Two hundred copies reprinted from the "American Journal of Numismatics", 1897. Four plates. Value \$75-\$100.

4. Doughty, F. W. THE CENTS OF THE UNITED STATES. Compiled by the author in 1890, based on a series of articles by David Proskey which were published in "The Coin Collector's Journal" in the early 1880's. Estimated 200 copies. Value \$45.

5. Newcomb, H. R. THE UNITED STATES CENTS OF THE YEARS 1801-1802-1803. One hundred copies printed in 1925. Five fine plates. Value \$200.

Rarity 3.

1. Clapp, G. H. THE UNITED STATES CENTS, 1804-1814. Published in 1941. Still available from the American Numismatic Society at \$10 or thereabouts.

2. Frossard, Ed. MONOGRAPH OF UNITED STATES CENTS AND HALF CENTS ISSUED BETWEEN THE YEARS 1793 and 1857. Three hundred copies printed in 1879. Nine plates. Value \$60.

3. Frossard, Ed and Hays, W. W. VARIETIES OF UNITED STATES CENTS OF THE YEAR 1794. Two hundred and fifty printed in 1893. Two fine plates. Value \$60-\$75.

4. As above, 1910 Gilbert edition. Three hundred copies printed, with four plates. Value \$50-\$60.

5. Gilbert, E. THE VARIETIES OF THE UNITED STATES CENTS OF 1796. Three hundred copies printed, with two plates. Value \$45.

Rarity 2.

1. Newcomb, H. R. UNITED STATES COPPER CENTS 1816-1857. Seven hundred and fifty copies printed in 1944. Value \$70.

2. Sheldon, W. H. EARLY AMERICAN CENTS, 1793-1814. Published in 1949. Value \$45.

3. Sheldon, W. H. PENNY WHIMSY. Published in 1958 but reprinted on three occasions. Value (of an original) \$50.

For most of the works cited above, there are not enough copies to take care of our membership, much less the numismatic world at large. Fortunately, there exist two excellent reprints by Quarterman Publications. The one which I edited includes all of those items focusing on 1793 and 1794 plus applicable portions of

Frossard 1879. The other, edited by Denis Loring, contains the items (or most of them) referring to 1795-1814. At \$30 each, these volumes are a very reasonable substitute for the elusive originals.

Reprint of an article which originally appeared in Pennywise.

PHOTOGRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS IN NUMISMATIC LITERATURE

by G. F. Kolbe

The first known book with numismatic illustrations was printed in Rome in 1517. Since that time, the majority of numismatic books have been illustrated. In these early works, illustrations were usually a vehicle for artistic expression, and accuracy of detail consequently suffered. This generally remained the case until mechanical means of reproducing coin illustrations were introduced.

In the early 1800's, the French inventor, Achille Collas achieved excellent results using a medallic-ruling machine. In the United States, a similar machine was developed by Christian Gobrecht and much improved by Joseph Saxton. The excellent illustrations in Eckfeldt and DuBois', "Manual of Gold and Silver Coins," published in Philadelphia in 1842, were produced by Saxton's machine.

But it was not until 1839 that W. H. F. Talbot demonstrated a new way, a method of "drawing by use of the sun," or photography. The rapid demise of the medallic-ruling machine is a tribute to the efficacy of photographic book illustrations.

Some of the numismatic books of this period utilized actual photographs as illustrations, for example, Hobler's "Records of Roman History Exhibited on Roman Coins," published in London in 1860, and, in the United States, the famous article on 1793 cents and half cents by S. S. Crosby, printed in the 1869 "American Journal of Numismatics."

Soon, photomechanical printing processes were developed to reproduce photographs. One plate, which could be used for repeated impressions, was indeed an economy. The term "Photomechanical Process" applies to a method of reproduction where many impressions can be made without further assistance from the action of light. The essential feature of this process utilizes the properties possessed by bichromated gelatine, bichromated albumen, or bichromated

bitumen, which becomes more or less insoluble under the action of light. Generally, the photographic image is made capable of giving impressions in greasy inks by typographic or lithographic methods. A discussion of several of these specific photographic printing processes follows. Thanks are given to Janet Lehr, a dealer in early photographic books, located in New York City. Her booklet, "Camera Work," forms the basis for much of the technical information in this article.

CARBON/AUTOTYPE/OZOTYPE

The Carbon Process, as patented by Swan in 1864, came as a result of efforts by various experimenters. The permanency of the carbon print relies on the relative stability of the element Carbon. Any color or tint can be added in the preparation of carbon transfer tissue: sepia, charcoal, red or blue, etc.

The transfer tissue, with its gelatine bichromate and tint, is exposed beneath the negative. The image developed on the transfer sheet is pressed on to a printing tissue. At this point, the image is reversed. To correct the reversal, a double transfer process was sometimes used. Products for production were produced by the Autotype Company. Ozotype altered the chemistry so that the printing process could be carried out in daylight and yield a print with finer definition.

Some notable examples of books with Autotype plates are most of the British Museum Catalogues of Greek, Oriental, and Indian coins, and also many of the Sotheby coin auction catalogues issued up until World War II. Autotype plates are no longer printed, since the process was lost during the war.

PHOTOGRAVURE

The photogravure process uses a copper plate, dusted with asphaltium or resin, which is fixed by heat. It is this process which causes the granulation seen in the finished photogravure. Sometimes the granulation is fine and detection of a grain requires magnification. A piece of carbon tissue is printed under a negative and transferred to the copper plate on which the image is then developed. The plate is etched with ferric perchloride baths of varying strengths. After removing the

resist, the plate is seen to be etched in different depths in proportion to the tones in the original photography. The plate is then inked and printed in the usual manner.

Most of the illustrations in the American Numismatic Society's "Numismatic Notes and Monographs," and "Museum Notes" utilize the photogravure process. The plates in Dr. William H. Sheldon's first edition of "Early American Cents," published in 1949, were also photogravures.

HELIOTYPE/WOODBURYTYPE

Heliotype uses a bichromate of gelatine plate, exposed and developed as in carbon printing. Development is carried on for several hours, until all the highlights are dissolved. Printing is accomplished directly from the treated gelatine film. The Woodburytype process is the same as Heliotype except that a transfer to a zinc plate is made for printing. Works reproduced using these processes are usually sepia, toned to emulate the rich tone of a fine albumen.

Probably the best known United States book with Heliotype plates is S. S. Crosby's 1875 classic, "The Early Coins of America." Curiously, an additional plate was prepared by Dr. Edward Maris a few years later for inclusion in this work, utilizing the Woodburytype process. Another well known work published with Heliotype plates is Ed Frossard's "Monograph of United States Cents and Half Cents Issued Between the Years 1793 and 1857." In this work, the die marriages were hand drawn on the plates in red ink.

COLLOTYPE/PHOTOTYPE/ARTOTYPE

Collotype is also known as phototype, and in slight variation as artotype. It is based on the principle that if a film of bichromated gelatine is exposed to light under a negative and the unaltered bichromated gelatine is washed out, the film will have a similar property to that possessed by a lithographic stone of attracting ink in some parts and absorbing water in others, the water repelling the ink. The discovery of this property was made by W. H. F. Talbot in 1853.

During the process of producing a collotype plate, the gelatine is allowed to

dry, producing a reticulation, and thereby a grainy effect. Works in this method vary in quality, but in general, are not as fine as those produced by photogravure, woodburytype, or the carbon process.

Although most of the illustrations contained in the auction catalogues produced by the firm of S. H. & H. Chapman were contact prints from glass negatives, several of their earlier sales contained Artotype plates. Dr. Sheldon's 1958 edition of "Penny Whimsy" and R. A. G. Carson's "Coins of the World," first published in 1962, are two recent examples of books containing Collotype plates.

HALF TONE

The credit of the idea of breaking up the image into dots by means of a network screen is attributable to W. H. F. Talbot. He proposed it in a patent dated 1852. He used gauze, but also suggested the use of a glass plate ruled with fine opaque lines. This is the means generally used today.

This technique allows type to be printed at the same time the image is being reproduced. It was a major advance, cutting costs of production.

An image reproduced by this method is a series of regularly spaced dots. It is unmistakable from all other methods. However, screens in use vary from 55 lines per inch to 300 lines per inch. The former dot can be seen with the naked eye, the latter not.

The great majority of recent numismatic books and catalogues are illustrated with half tones. This is mostly a matter of economy. Nowadays, the other forms of illustrating books or catalogues are prohibitively expensive. While half tone coin plates are often excellent, they suffer a fault not common to the other processes. Carbon, Gravure, Helio type, and Collotype plates can be studied under magnification to clarify detail. When a half tone is subjected to magnification, all one sees is printed dots.

BOOKSHELF BIBLIOMANIA

by Jack Collins

I have recently been called, among an assortment of other names, a "Bibliomaniac's Bibliomaniac," and not altogether unjustly so. At least part of the reasoning (?) behind the dubbing of such a cognomen lies below. At the peril of your own sanity, read on. . .

I have encountered a biblio-dilemma of monumental proportions (for me, that is!). The perplexing question that is robbing me of much, much needed beauty (?) sleep is: WHICH IS CORRECT? LEFT-TO-RIGHT, OR RIGHT-TO-LEFT? Should books and catalogs be placed on the shelf in chronological order reading from the left or from the right?

All right, all right. . . I can mentally hear your collective screams as you read this, all saying, "WHO CARES! !" Well, I, for one am, unfortunately, burdened with the neurotic weight of such bibliomania trivia, and, therefore, I plaintively ask: "Left or right?" This question has long baffled novice bibliophile and advanced bibliomaniac alike, not to mention the librarians in some of our most revered institutions such as ANS (I thought I said not to mention them!).

Apparently, the ANS is similarly confused on this score, as they concede to using both versions. The books and catalogs on their shelves are placed with the titles reading from left to right. However, whenever you find a volume of several auction catalogs, they are always bound together chronologically from front-to-back, and consequently, when placed upon a shelf would appear from right-to-left. Right? I mean, "Correct?" Are then both versions correct? How about alternating both versions, whereas one row of books or catalogs would be placed on the shelf reading right-to-left, and the following row would read left-to-right?

At this point, I'm sure you're all as thoroughly confused as I am. Therefore, until some kind soul bibliomaniac out there can help me resolve this one way or another, I'm taking all of my books off the shelves and putting them in piles on the floor! Now, then. . . Should I make the piles face up or face down?

In the immortal words of Thor, the "B.C." comic strip character, who once said, "Arrrrraghhh! !"

Next. . . The burning issue of whether spine titles should read up or down (frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn!).

TRY COLLECTING CATALOGS

by Q. David Bowers

Collecting auction catalogs offers several advantages. First of all, unless you are very careful you are apt to learn a lot! And, knowledge is probably the most valuable single commodity in numismatics. I'd rather have an ounce of knowledge than an ounce of gold anytime. Second, forming a set of auction catalogs from your favorite or several dealers can be an interesting challenge.

Perhaps in some distant decade a collection of catalogs of a particular dealer will be worth many hundreds or many thousands of dollars, just as, for example, a set of Chapman catalogs from the turn of the century would bring well into five figures if sold today, and, unless I miss my guess, complete run of Mehl catalogs would bring many thousands.

Numismatic periodicals offer another area. I refer constantly to my complete set of *The Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine* and to my nearly complete set of *The Numismatist* (official journal of the American Numismatic Association). There are many, many articles, items and tidbits of information in those publications which cannot be found in reference books. And, these publications offer a good measure of anecdotes, human interest, and fascinating writing in a romantic vein, something which is absent from reference books which list sterile columns of dates, mintages and mintmarks.

In more recent years *Coin World* (published since 1960), *Numismatic News* (published since 1952), *Coins Magazine*, *COINage*, and others offer possibilities. Here, again, the cost is apt to be negligible.

Specialized groups such as the Civil War Token Society, the Token and Medal Society, and the Society of Paper Money Collectors each issue publications of interest. I am now trying to complete my back files of publications from these groups and, frankly, I am having a tough time doing it! The problem is not with the cost, for issues are cheap. It is the opportunity to find them.

Seeking a new diversion? Consider numismatic ephemera-printed material, artifacts, and other items related to coins. The field is immense, the cost is low, the possibilities are virtually endless, a challenge awaits you, and the reward of increased knowledge is yours. As they say, "You can't lose!"

More obvious, perhaps, are coin catalogs and reference books, many of which have the potential of becoming collectors' items in their own right. At a convention a year ago I saw a copy of the first edition of *A Guide Book of the United States Coins*, bearing a cover date of 1947 but published in 1946, sell for \$65! Issues of B. Max Mehl's *Star Rare Coins Encyclopedia*, an extremely common booklet once issued by the millions by the famous Fort Worth, Texas dealer, are

often priced at \$5 to \$10 each — a nice “investment” for those who originally bought them for \$1.

Speaking of Mehl, when I first began my interest in rare coins in the early 1950s, most collectors had a stack of his catalogs. Usually when buying a collection I would get an armload of Mehl auction booklets, most of which had no value at the time. The usual procedure was to discard them or to give them away. Only a few such as the Ten Eyck, Dunham (Mehl’s finest effort; this huge volume was issued in 1941), Atwater, and a few others commanded a premium. A nice copy of the Dunham Collection catalog might sell for \$10. Big deal.

Today, in 1979, many other Mehl catalogs have significant values. Copies are eagerly sought, and when they appear on the market many issues which were worthless in the 1950s will bring \$10 to \$20 each or more.

This brings me to the suggestion that today’s auction catalogs may have some future value. Now in 1979 there is the opportunity to assemble sets of the catalogs issued by various firms, including my own (Bowers & Ruddy Galleries), Stack’s, Rarcoa, Paramount, Kreisberg-Cohen, Abe Kosoff, Superior, Steve Ivy, New England, NASCA, Jess Peters, Kagin, and others. Often slightly-used copies can be picked up for little or nothing from collectors who aren’t inclined toward building a library. And yet some of these do have value.

I was fascinated the other day when a gentleman from Norway sent us a check for \$50 hoping to buy a copy of the Stanislaw Herstal Collection catalog issued by us (and in 1964 advertised to *Coin World* readers for \$5 per copy). We didn’t have an extra copy on hand, nor did we know where one could be obtained. Back to Norway went his remittance!

Today’s auction catalogs contain much more information than did the catalogs from the past. For information alone they are worth collecting. Years ago the arrival of a New Netherlands Coin Company catalog would be the occasion for a celebration — it meant a couple of evenings of good reading so as not to miss a single enticing coin description. Likewise, when the first of two catalogs issued by Stack’s featuring the Anderson-Dupont Collection arrived at my home in 1954 I stayed up until midnight poring over its pages.

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AN AMERICAN CLASSIC

by G. F. Kolbe

In the late 1860s Sylvester Sage Crosby began gathering information for a book still widely regarded as the most important historical work ever written on American numismatics. It was not an easy task. Crosby chaired a publication committee of six whose plans for the work were thus stated: "It is the intention of the Committee to make it a more complete and thorough work on the early Numismatic history of America than has ever been published." The research alone was a prodigious task. Before long, however, Crosby found himself reduced to a committee of one. Though discouraged by this unfortunate turn of events Crosby persevered, and in 1875 his magnum opus finally appeared entitled: "The Early Coins of America; and the Laws Governing their Issue. Comprising also Description of the Washington Pieces, the Anglo-American Tokens, Many Pieces of Unknown Origin, of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, and the First Patterns of the United States Mint."

The work was originally issued to subscribers in twelve parts. The first part was issued under the auspices of the New England Numismatic and Archaeological Society in 1873 and contained a title page with that date. By the time the final parts were issued Crosby had personally taken over publication and an 1875 title page and revised introduction were included along with instructions to cancel the 1873 title page and introduction. These instructions were not always followed and the 1873 title page is found in some copies. Occasionally copies are also found with an 1878 date. The text is identical to the 1875 edition and apparently this imprint is comprised of unsold copies of the original edition issued by Estes & Lauriat with a new title page.

In all, 350 copies of the book were printed, allowing perhaps for a modest printer's overrun. From shortly after publication until the 1940s the book was in constant demand and sold at a considerable premium. In 1945, Chicago coin dealer R. Green issued the first of the reprints. It was limited to 500 copies and, appropriately enough, was bound in green cloth. Green apparently planned to issue a supplement to Crosby also, but never did so. By the 1950s the supply had dried up and copies of the original issue were again selling at a premium.

In 1965 the Token and Medal Society issued the second Crosby reprint. It was duplicated from the personal copy of a well known California numismatist Ralph A. "Curly" Mitchell. It was about this time that I was becoming interested in numismatic books and this reprint was my first copy of Crosby. I recall being in the hospital for minor surgery and reading it from cover to cover. I doubt I remember 1% of the factual information but it did give me a feeling for the era and a great deal of respect for Mr. Crosby. In 1970 Burt Franklin issued a

reprint in reduced format.

Leaving the best for last, we come to the 1974 reprint published by Quarterman. The quality of this reprint exceeds the others and is greatly enhanced by an excellent forward by Eric P. Newman. Additionally, it includes reproductions of the various title pages, original wrappers to various parts, announcement letters, contemporary reviews of the book, etc. In fact, much of the information for this column is drawn from Newman's forward and also from John J. Ford, Jr.'s 1951 *Numismatica Americana* article in the Coin Collectors Journal.

The ten Crosby coin plates were made by the heliotype patent, an early photographic printing process. These plates are superior to even the best of the reprints since magnification can be employed to clarify details. Nearly all reprint coin plates and indeed most modern coin illustrations are made by the halftone process. Without getting into details of halftone production, when an illustration is viewed under magnification all one sees is "dots". Most newspapers use coarse halftones and the "dots" are usually visible even without magnification.

An additional plate, intended for inclusion in *The Early Coins of America* was issued by Dr. Edward Maris in 1876. It utilized a slightly different photographic process called Woodburytype. The plate illustrated 48 varieties of Connecticut, Vermont and New Jersey coppers not on the Crosby plates. It is quite scarce. The famous Maris collection of New Jersey cents, incidentally, is still intact though it will be likely broken up when it is offered in one of the remaining Garrett auction sales.

Currently, original copies of Crosby sell in the \$200-300 range. This seems quite modest in view of the work's many virtues. It is a large handsome book with excellent illustrations and, as stated before, it embodies perhaps the most important and thorough research ever done on American numismatics. In addition only 350 copies were printed, many of which are in institutions, and some copies have undoubtedly perished. The explanation may lie in the fact that reprints have almost always been available in recent years which evidently has lessened the demand for the original edition.

Sylvester Sage Crosby's name appears on the front facade of the American Numismatic Society headquarters building in New York and he is the only American accorded that honor. He was elected to the American Numismatic Association Hall of Fame in 1970. In his lifetime (1831-1914) Crosby saw United States numismatics develop from a casual pastime into the beginnings of a science, due in no small part to his own efforts. A watchmaker and jeweler by

profession, Crosby's exacting nature has assured him a prominent place in the history of American numismatics. He will not soon be forgotten.

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Beginning with the next issue, there will be a "Swaps and Sales" section for members to advertise their wants or duplicates for sale or trade. Advertising rates will be 10 cents per word. Numbers or prices count as one word. Display advertising rates are \$25.00 per full page, \$12.50 per half page, \$7.00 per quarter page. \$3.50 per eighth page.

This introductory issue is being sent free to all those who might have an interest in numismatic literature. For future issues, it will be necessary to charge on the basis of \$5.00 per year to attempt to break even with this venture.

BIBLIOMANIA MEETING
AT CINCINNATI ANA

There will be a meeting of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society at this year's ANA convention in Cincinnati, on Monday, August 18th, at 8:00 p.m., in the Bamboo Room of Stouffer's Cincinnati Towers. We have been able to enlist the speaking services of John J. Ford, Jr. to add sparkle to the evening. (Please wear hip boots!). If you are coming to the ANA in Cincinnati, please plan to attend our meeting. It was great fun at last year's first meeting, and this year's event should be even better!

Look upon books frankly as a vice, but one which leaves some respectable evidence of its pleasures to show for it. It's cheaper than a mistress, and far more amenable to your mood and convenience. And if you pursue book collecting properly, chances are that you can't afford a mistress, and that alone will save you a peck of trouble!

— *Norman H. Strouse*

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BIBLIOMANIA MEETING AT CINCINNATI ANA

On August 18, 1980, over 100 members and guests attended the first formal meeting of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society at the American Numismatic Association convention in Cincinnati. After those in attendance introduced themselves and briefly described their book collecting specialties, George Kolbe introduced fellow bibliomaniac and noted numismatic scholar, John J. Ford, Jr. An edited transcript of Ford's entertaining and informative discussion follows:

JOHN FORD: My name is John Ford, and I don't know what I'm doing here! The interest indicated by the audience is rather diverse, and it's pretty difficult for me to know where to begin. First, I'd like to make a comment: Vincent Alones mentioned the name of Clarence Edgar. Clarence Edgar was a bank teller in my home town of Rockville Centre, New York. In the summer of 1935, when I was eleven years old, I became interested in coins. I would borrow a dollar from my father and I'd get a couple of rolls of Lincoln cents, take them home and look for SVDBs, 14Ds and so forth. I'd go through them in a half hour and be back for more. Either because he felt sorry for me or to get rid of me (because I drove him nuts!), Clarence Edgar gave me my first legitimate rare coin, an 1846 silver dollar. Clarence subsequently got me into coin dealing on the side, and we became very good friends. After World War II, he became a specialist in selling numismatic books, as did my late friend Aaron Feldman. Clarence Edgar died in 1958, and of course, Aaron Feldman died in 1976. Feldman is the fellow who popularized the saying, "Buy the book before the coin."

Now, I don't know how one becomes a dealer in numismatic literature. Bibliomania is an excellent description. It is a mania! It's a disease! You get involved and one book leads to another.

I'm surprised to see that there are any coin dealers here at all tonight, because I was under the impression that most of the current breed couldn't read! No, I take that back. It's a dirty crack. They can read. They can read the *Grey Sheet*, and they can find the pages in the *Guide Book*, but beyond that their libraries are limited. I asked some of them the reasons for that, and the usual reply was, "I don't have time." They want something with pictures, and underneath the pictures they want prices. Preferably, you put out the new editions very quickly with new prices (which is good for the guys who print them), but anything that involves more

than a sentence or two of composition befuddles them because it becomes boring. I'm not being sarcastic. No, I *am* being sarcastic! In fact, I'm being nasty! I think many of the coin dealers would be a lot better off if they read something. I'm serious.

Incidentally, I'd like this to be an informal discussion. It's not a formal talk. I've nothing here to read from. I don't have any notes, or Ronald Reagan index cards.

The other day I was working in my library, and I came across one of the first numismatic books I ever obtained, a copy of Gilbert's work on half cents. I mention it because it's rather interesting. In looking at the book, a thought went through my mind about the circumstances under which it was obtained. In October of 1941, I visited Thomas Elder in Pleasantville, New York. At that time, Elder must have been in his late sixties. Homer K. Downing and I had heard about the legendary Tom Elder, and we went up to see him together. Though he was semi-retired, he still ran ads in *Hobbies Magazine*. We went up to find out if he had any coins left.

Elder, who originally published the Gilbert half cent book in 1916, still had a quantity of unbound copies available. He asked us, "Would you like one of these at three dollars?" meaning the unbound text and the set of eight photographic plates. We both gave him the three dollars and we each got a set. I went to a book-binder in the Bronx named Levine, who was also frequented by Homer Downing and the American Numismatic Society. I think he charged me another three dollars to bind the book. To give you an idea of what kind of an amateur I was, I had the title of the book put on the front cover: United States Half Cents / E. Gilbert, and underneath, 1916. Then, at the bottom of the cover, I put "John J. Ford, 1941," which was the way a real seventeen-year-old would do it.

If I was going to see Tom Elder today, I would certainly handle the situation differently. The first thing I would do after finding out that he wanted three dollars for one copy, would be to ask him what he wanted for the whole pile. The second thing I would do would be to get him to autograph as many copies as I could. Then, instead of having the book bound in plain library buckram with my name on the cover (which is rather crass), I would have them nicely bound with the title and author stamped on the spine. Obviously, having the title stamped on the front cover instead of the spine is not very practical if you're looking for a book on the shelf.

In the last thirty-nine years, I've gotten heavily involved with numismatic literature. The reason is very simple. I was very much interested in collecting coins, and subsequently began dealing in coins to pay for my collecting interests. Then I became a full-time professional so that I could spend 24 hours a day on numismatics, a subject which meant everything to me!

Early on, when I was approaching being a full-time dealer (in fact, I was practically a full-time dealer, as I was out of work and was *schlepping* coins to eat), I went out to Montauk to visit with Wayte Raymond. During one of our early conversations, I asked him what was the secret of the coin business. I said, "Do you have to have a lot of money? Do you have to have a big stock of coins? Do you have to have real good customers? What's the secret?" Wayte Raymond replied,

“John, it’s very simple: You just have to know more than the man you’re doing business with.”

It’s quite obvious that books are concentrated knowledge. There’s no one that I’m aware of who has collected numismatic literature who has read every page of every book. If you find somebody who says that they have, they’re kidding you. The thing to do is to become familiar enough with the book and its contents to know where to locate information quickly. That’s the value of a numismatic library. In my opinion, it’s knowing that the information is there.

Of course, a good numismatic library goes beyond having the books on the shelves. It involves having files of photographs, pamphlets, documents, and related pieces of information, because not all of the data that’s available in the coin business has been published. I have Xerox copies, typewritten copies, carbon copies, and all other manuscripts authored by Walter Breen which have never been published, and they’re invaluable to me. In addition to that, I have practically my entire correspondence file (at least my end of it) of the letters that Walter wrote to me in 1949 and 1950. A lot of the information in those letters is not dated information. It’s information that you can’t find anywhere else, and it might not even still be in Walter’s head. He may have forgotten some of it. A good library encompasses not just the books, but the related material, the archival material, the notes, the photographs, the documents, and so on. As I stated earlier, the average dealer wants a few books, and he wants simplicity. He wants pictures, and he wants valuations. Well, I’m not going to pick on the average dealer. The average collector, and particularly the investor-oriented individual, wants a “quick fix.” He wants an easy solution to his problems. Unfortunately, numismatics is not that kind of a business. I believe that it was Di Vinci who said that the definition of genius is “minute attention to detail.” If there ever was a business that required minute attention to detail, it’s numismatics. How someone can get a book for five bucks, and subscribe to a *Grey Sheet* and have minute attention to detail is beyond my comprehension! That is “playing the market”; it’s playing “pricing”; it’s playing “valuations”. It’s knowing who pays what, and how much everybody else is paying, and what it was worth yesterday, and how much it might be worth tomorrow. But the reasons for those prices, and the reasons why Mr. X and Mr. Y will pay them, and the reasons why the prices will change up or down, is based entirely upon the importance of the item and also upon how many people are likely to perceive that importance. In other words, knowledge allows you to anticipate the market.

Of course, it’s very easy to make these pontifical remarks. In fact, they’re almost obvious. But you’d be surprised how few people have followed them over the years. In a couple of talks I’ve given, I have remarked that more good, basic numismatic literature, reference books, definitive books, and fine books have been published in the last twenty years than in the previous century of American numismatics. That’s true. We are getting to the era of specialization. The material is there. In fact, it’s coming out so fast, and there is so much of it, that it is hard to keep up with. It’s been my *modus operandi* for the past thirty years to buy any book or reference that pertains directly or indirectly to American numismatics. This includes the peripheral areas of Central America, the West Indies and Canada. And then, there are European

books that have a connotation relating to American numismatics.

Since I retired from being an active dealer in 1971, and have returned again to collecting, I have traveled farther and farther afield on numismatic literature. In other words, I now buy books on banking. In fact, I've lately worked very hard collecting the *Banker's Magazine*, the *Banker's Almanac*, and various other related publications of the late 1870s and 1880s designed for the banking fraternity. If you collect National banknotes, why would you want banking magazines of the 1880s? Well, I'll tell you why. These banking magazines contain the obituaries of all the bankers who were active in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s, and who signed the obsolete banknotes and operated the obsolete banks. These obituaries are, presumably, to my knowledge, the only place where you can get information on a lot of these people. It's a tremendous source of research material.

My personal inclination is to collect books to have access to the knowledge in the books. Now, there are people who collect books for other reasons. Some people collect nice bindings. Some people collect in directions which I find hard to fathom. For example, it's been a great mystery to me why anybody would want to buy old *Red Books*. It's mystified me for years. I have old *Red Books*. Dick Yeoman's been sending me complimentary copies for the last twenty years, and they're all autographed. I keep them for sentimental reasons, but I never look at them. I see where certain editions bring several hundred dollars. Why?

GUEST: I'll tell you why. I heard this, and I assume that it's true. When some collectors decide to sell, they want the old *Red Books* from the time they were buying coins with the prices they were paying, in order to avoid large taxes.

FORD: That smells like fraud!

HARRY BASS: Why did Wayte Raymond make those National Coin Albums? Well, it's because there will always be an empty hole left for the coin you didn't have. The same theory applies to a series of books.

FORD: You mean that they become collectibles just because they want each year?

BASS: Because they're numbered. Just like the *Numismatist* is numbered. Do you have all of the *Numismatists*?

FORD: Yes. But there's a reason for that, Harry. You know it as well as I do. Each issue of the *Numismatist* contains information. And quite frankly, as a guide to the actual market at the time of publication, the *Red Book* is a very unreliable source. If I were doing it, I'd take the *Numismatist* or the *Numismatic Scrapbook* for the period in question and look at the ads. You'll have a much better idea of the market, right down to the month.

GUEST: May I call the speaker's attention to the fact that we were talking about bibliomania?

FORD: Okay. I take it that there's all types of schizophrenia in numismatics. As I said, my basic interest in collecting books is for the information that they contain. However, I've gone afield. I've gone astray. I've bought duplicate books because they had a bookplate in them of a famous numismatist, or because it was a presentation copy. I've also bought duplicate copies to upgrade the bindings. I love leather! (audience laughter) What's so funny about that?

GUEST: Do you also have a nice leather jacket, John?

FORD: Oooooohhh!

GUEST: You used to be quicker, too, John.

FORD: Well, I'm tired. I had a rough day on the bourse. I didn't have my sneakers on today. I have new shoes, and it was awful over there. You're sitting in the front row just to keep me awake!

BASS: John, I'm no authority, and I know that I can't boost your ego any, because it's up there pretty good, but if the opportunity ever arose, I would pay you a substantial premium to add that Gilbert book that you have to my library.

GUEST: Quick, buy some more copies, John!

BASS: You might not realize it, but you're moving in to the genre of Elder, Wayne Raymond, B. Max Mehl.

FORD: Harry, I'll see you in the lobby in about an hour. I'm going to digress here. I have to tell you something about Harry Bass. Somehow, he heard that I was affiliated with a company called Ford Numismatic Publications. Now, what was Ford Numismatic Publications? When I was with New Netherlands Coin Company in the late 1950s, the business was slow. We had lots of coins and very few customers. You went to an ANA convention, and you could walk around the bourse in an hour and a half. Then, you had to keep repeating that for three or four days, because there were only thirty or forty dealers. I knew them all by their first names. They knew what I wanted, and I knew what they wanted. It was a very friendly thing, and we had plenty of free time. In fact, that's how the game of Dollar Poker developed. Since we had time, we could talk to the customers. One of the things that I always tried to do was sell them a book. We even put on every page in our auction catalogues back in the late 1950s, "A well informed customer is our best customer." I found that a customer who came in knowing what he wanted and why he wanted it, was an easy guy to sell something to. In fact, all you had to do was lay the thing down, and the guy would climb up on the table. He wanted it, which was a lot different than my giving him a sales pitch.

Now, because we had a small office, selling numismatic books was difficult. I induced Clarence Edgar and a fellow by the name of Jack Munson to set up a business called Ford Numismatic Publications, in Lindbrook, New York, where they

had some space to keep the books. I was supposed to find advantageous book buys, and send them preferred customers. They were supposed to make up listings. Munson dropped out, Edgar died, and a fellow by the name of Werner Amelingmeier became involved. Werner was a Ford dealer in Lindbrook, who came to see me in 1951. I had known him for many years, from the time when I worked for Lever Brothers as a purchasing agent, in Fort Carswell. He said, "Now that you're a full-time coin dealer, let me know if you get any coins that are interesting or good buys." He was one of the first coin investors. This was in 1951. I'll tell you how we got Werner involved in investing. We had an auction, strictly of foreign coins, and if we didn't get any bids on something, we sold it to Werner. You might say that's a shameful way to treat somebody, but he made a lot of money. He really did. If we got a fifty dollar bid on a coin that was estimated at one hundred dollars, and I thought the coin should bring eighty, I gave it to Werner for fifty-five dollars. My partner, Charles Wormser, had a thing about our not buying anything from our own auctions. Werner took all of his profits from the used car business, which was considerable in the 1950s, and put it into coins. It got to the point that Werner had coins and coins and coins, and he started to wonder what it was all about.

When the numismatic book business became available after Edgar's death in 1958, Werner said, "I'll play with that." His real reason was that he could look at all these books, and find out what these coins were that I had been sticking him with all those years. He was like a different person. He took all of the books, and put them upstairs in the Ford agency. Now, this was a *schlock* Ford agency! The reason was obvious. He was taking all of the money out of the business and buying coins, and he wasn't even painting the place. In 1966, Harry Bass said to me, "Who's this guy that runs Ford Numismatic Publications?" I told him it was Werner Amelingmeier. Well, it took Harry two days just to be able to pronounce it! I told him to take the train out to Rockville Centre, and that I'd drive him over to see Werner. Now, I want to show you how dedicated Harry was early on. It was either November or December of 1966, and it was cold. The temperature must have been about 25 degrees upstairs where the books were, and there was no heater. I dumped Harry off about one o'clock in the afternoon. He spent four or five hours there looking at books and auction catalogues, and anything else he could find. He was stowing cartons full of the stuff. I rescued him about six o'clock. His nose and hands were blue, but he was having a ball. I took him home and we had supper, and then he started talking about all of the junk he had picked up. We continued talking until about two o'clock in the morning, and Harry ended up sleeping on the couch. I didn't think Harry was going to stay that late, and I'm sure Harry didn't either. The point is, Harry got the bug for numismatic literature that afternoon and evening. He is one of the few well-to-do collectors that I've ever met who became enamoured with numismatic literature. Most people who have the funds and the wherewithal to be real collectors, and who buy expensive coins, don't have the time to read. I assume that Harry has the time, because he sure as hell has gone after the books. I think that he uses them the same way that I do.

In 1968, when Harry was at my house, he took one look at my library and

offered me a deal. I'm still trying to figure it out. He said, "I want to buy your whole library, and you can have the use of it until you die." What were you going to do, Harry? Have a hit man get me on Monday? After all, we're the same age!

BASS: I'll still take the deal!

FORD: He must know something that I don't. I'm trying to stay healthy, Harry. I take vitamins.

Anyhow, I do think that it's terrific that a serious collector is interested in numismatic literature. I got a call the other day from a major coin company, and they asked my opinion of a job applicant. The guy in question is very involved in collecting numismatic literature, and that, to me, is one hell of a plus. If I was in the coin business today, and running one of these big companies with 35 or 40 employees, the most important thing outside of the applicant's honesty would be his inclination into having a library, from an intellectual viewpoint. An inventory of his library would probably be my major qualification for a competent numismatist.

On a rising market, anybody can run up and down the bourse aisles and make money. On a static market, only about 30% can make money. On a down market, only 2 or 3% can make money. I'm talking now about the normal coin business. I'm *not* talking about the speculative rolls and bags and garbage. I'm talking about numismatic material. The man with the knowledge knows what he's looking at and what it is. If he's real good, he knows where it's been. If he knows all that, he knows where it should go, and that's the ball game. You only can do that with books! Nobody has a mind, not even Walter Breen, that can store all of the contents of all of the numismatic books in one head. You really have to have a library.

Now, there are variables in collecting numismatic literature. As you all know, or should know, George Kolbe has auction sales. In these sales, he sometimes offers eighteenth-century books with beautiful copperplate engravings. They are usually in Latin or German, and the engravings are very quaint. The bindings have worm holes in them, and the whole thing smells musty and is falling apart. And yet, George gets a couple of hundred dollars for them. Now, I think that the guy that buys those books is some kind of a nut! First of all, he puts it in his library, and it's going to be a source of bugs for the rest of the books for years. That's true, you know, they all have worm holes. Secondly, there's nothing in those books that will teach you anything. The guys that made the copperplate engravings were out of touch with the guys that wrote the books. They took artistic license. They made Vespasian look like Augustus, and Augustus like Vespasian. All of the illustrations were hand engraved on a copper plate, and they are inaccurate. The information, if it's in Latin, is worthless to me, and I think even to most doctors. But the books are still collectors' items.

It's a similar situation with *Heath Counterfeit Detectors*. You can buy four Counting House editions, which are larger format, and three Pocket editions, and you have all the different types of *Heath Counterfeit Detectors*. The only variables beyond that were caused by the girls who inserted the plates. Sometimes, they

stuck in a couple of extra plates. In other words, the plates were laid out on a table, and the girls just *schlepped* them into the books, bang, bang, bang. Sometimes, you can get awfully weird plate arrangements. There are nuts who try to collect every *Heath Counterfeit Detector*, of which there are 17 or 18 editions, and multiple printings of many editions. Several people have attempted to list all the variants, and it's an almost endless job. As soon as you think that you've got all of the 45 or 50 different varieties, some guy comes up with a new one. Then, there are presentation and full leather copies.

There are also many facets to collecting nineteenth-century auction catalogues. You can collect them by dealer, or you can try to get them all, as John Adams is trying to do. You can collect them whether the individual lots are priced or not, but, to me, those catalogues are worthless unless you know what the coins actually sold for. Then you can advance and try to collect catalogues with buyers' names, which is necessary for pedigree research. You can insist on the catalogue having all the photographic plates. You can insist on the binding being pristine. You can carry this in any direction that you want.

The big thing at the moment is collecting Hard Times tokens and related merchants' tokens. Since part II of the Garrett sale, a lot of people have gone bananas over this series. They ask me, "What books should I have?" I tell them that they must have a copy of the J.N.T. Levick sale by W. Elliot Woodward, of May, 1884, and also, the Benjamin Betts sale held by Lyman Low in January, 1898. If you're not familiar with the Betts sale, I have a copy here on the table in a contemporary binding. It was purchased today at the bourse table of George Kolbe, who, in my opinion, sold it too cheap! It displays the bookplate of Charles M. Johnson. Now, who is Charles M. Johnson? He was the man who was the sparkplug and the father of the ANA headquarters in Colorado Springs. This catalogue was earlier in the library of Ralph R. Barker of Providence, Rhode Island. His library was broken up in the 1930s or early 1940s. He was a turn of the century numismatist.

The Betts catalogue has three or four plates which are halftones, and a couple of plates of line drawings. The illustrations were poorly done and are of little usefulness. In listing Betts' collection of merchants' tokens and other items, Lyman Low sprinkled the catalogue throughout with footnotes. These footnotes contain information, particularly on the tokens, which is not found anywhere else. If you're interested in tokens, the information you need is right here in this catalogue. For example: lot 292, *The Theatre of New York. America. Front View of the Old Park View Theatre*. This penny, which is considered Colonial, sells today for about \$3500. In Low's footnote, he states: "The Park Theatre, which this token is genuinely believed to refer to, was commenced June 1, 1795 and completed in 1798. The proprietors petitioned for permission to erect a portico over the sidewalk, but was not granted. The theatre was burned May 25, 1820, and again, in 1821 according to one authority. In February, 1824, a grand ball was given for the benefit of the Greeks when \$2,000.00 was realized." I don't know where else to find that information except in the Betts catalogue. That's why this catalogue is worth owning. If you collect merchants' tokens, it can tell you something about the tokens.

(continued next issue)

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

The first issue of the Asylum arrived today, and I've just finished reading it. Here's my subscription, and I'll be happy to be counted as one of the nuts to be added into the fruitcake. Hopefully, this will grow into an important organization that is well needed.

Richard Picker

Enclosed is my subscription to the Asylum. I especially enjoyed reading the comments of fellow book and catalog collectors concerning their "mania". And here for a long time I thought that I was the only book-looney with a coin interest second only to building my reference library. . . . I'm Free at last!! . . . no more self-doubts about my sanity!!!

Richard E. Lane

Congrats on Asylum! I apply for commitment and enclose check, for straight jacket.

Randolph Zander

To the Asylum,
Attention Head Keeper:

The following may be of interest to you. While no names can be mentioned, the patient referred to is under our care and treatment. The case is quite sad, and we seize any opportunity to relieve pressures upon those who must remain in close contact with the patient.

Case History: Diagnosis: Bibliomaniacus Progressus

Patient is one of an edition of three circa 1912. Original vellum but quite worn about the edges. Original gilt top now oxidized to

gray. Internally shaken and may not be playing with a full deck.

Examination indicates that the current problems stem from a previous well diagnosed attack of Numismaticus Collectorensus, complicated by a particularly virulent strain of Philatelicus Americanicus which is frequently found in conjunction with the prior problem. (See Bowers, Kosoff, Scott and Gibbons for details.)

Although no cure was ever made, the two serious maladies were held in remission through a regime of medication consisting of wonder drug MS65 and MS60. The Philatelicus was held in check by a massive dose of 404 M. N.H. XF. As can be seen, no cost was too great in the attempt to restore the patient to normalcy.

Unfortunately, in the midst of treatment an unforeseen injection of Bibliographical serum was administered by a well meaning practitioner. This immediately set off a raging collecting fever in the patient. It was into this maelstrom of misery that your Volume 1 #1 arrived. It has served to ease the fever momentarily.

It is with this poor Devil's welfare in mind that you will find enclosed the initial fee required for entrance into "The Asylum". Please rush the next issue as soon as it is available so as to alleviate the enormous strain on hard pressed family and friends.

Howard S. Baron
Head of Ward

I do not approve of the name Bibliomania and will never join under that name.

G. L.

I was pleased to see renewed interest in a Numismatic Bibliomania Society. I have been looking for a shepherd to guide this little lost sheep into the greener paths of Bibliomania.

J. Richard Becker

Many thanks for sending us your psychiatric journal. I think the idea has much to commend it.

David Edmunds
Seaby (Rare Books) Ltd.

Thank you for the introductory issue of the Asylum. The first issue stresses American numismatics. Would you be considering ancient Greek, Roman, and other areas? So little attention is given these areas in the United States in most of the available publications. European sources do cover these subjects extensively but the language problem requires translation, a publication such as you propose, could provide a resume of major articles, or even arrange a shared interpretation service to minimize costs.

Book reviews of current publications, references to articles in magazines and other sources, available off prints of lectures, exhibitions, comments as to reprints — all are fertile sources to aid the numismatist and the bibliomaniac. Your possible expansion into these areas should increase the range of subscribers and make a valuable contribution to the devoted hobbyist.

Herman Miller

"In response to the muddy thinking of Jack Collins on the subject of bookshelf order"

Ha! Any fool knows that the correct way to place books on the shelf is by area of interest, reading from left to right, and with spine titles reading from bottom to top. Unless of course the librarian is a left-handed bibliophile (a sub species), in which case the whole process is reversed.

It should also be noted that the foregoing holds true only in the Northern Hemisphere. In the Southern Hemisphere the Coriolis effect reverses the order once again. This may explain why so little numismatic literature of note has come from New Zealand, Antarctica, and Punta Del Este.

The reader might be interested in the underlying physiology of spine title reading from bottom to top. Basically, it has to do with the left side of the brain having developed language ability and therefore greater mass. Gravitational attraction makes it more comfortable to tilt the head toward the left shoulder as one slides from left to right while perusing the titles in one's numismatic library.

There! Doesn't it seem simple once it has been explained?

John R. Mawhinney

DEAR Sir,
I WANT TO JOIN
YOUR BOOK CLUB

X
H. Joseph Levine

WOODWARD vs FROSSARD

by John W. Adams

The early numismatic literature turns us on. Just why this should be so is sometimes difficult to explain to the uninitiated. We can point to pages which contain long-forgotten facts; we can trace opinions which became the foundation of what is today considered numismatic knowledge.

However, dusty facts and opinions are obviously insufficient to explain our bibliomania. There is a living, personal element at work here — one which adds warmth and zest to the treasures which line our shelves. To illustrate, I would like to reconstruct a contretemps between Edouard Frossard and W.E. Woodward.

Frossard and Woodward were, of course, two of our early coin dealers. In fact, Woodward was one of the original "First Three". At the time of our story in 1881, he was the only one of the three still practicing the trade and, as such, was considered by most to be the dean of the profession. Frossard was relatively new to the business, having hung out his shingle in 1878. Both men published auction catalogs; in addition, Frossard edited and published a lively periodical by the name of "Numisma".

The duel begins with small fanfare. On January 10, 1881, Woodward commenced auctioning the well known collection of William Jenks. Lot #468 in the sale is described by the catalog as follows:

468 Pescennius Niger. Head of Pescennius Niger facing right; "Imp Caes Pes Nigerius", etc.; rev., figure standing, facing left; "Concordia". Aureus; pierced over the head, in other respects fine; of the greatest rarity.

It is well known that a gold coin of Pescennius Niger was for a long time one of the treasures in the cabinet of the King of France, and that the coin was stolen many years ago, the general opinion being that it went to the crucible. The suggestion is presented of the possibility that such was not the fate of the piece in question, but that, saved from destruction, it here appears again. The owner of the piece is able to trace it in responsible hands for more than thirty years, which period carries us well back towards the time of the robbery alluded to. In brief, the story is this: — Mr. Connor was, for many years prior to 1870, an owner and manager of real estate in the city of Boston. About 1850 he had in some of his houses quite a colony of Italians. The rent falling due, one of his Italian tenants was unable to meet it, and placed in Mr. Connor's hands this coin as security, exacting a promise that it should be kept and returned to him, stating that he prized it highly because it was a gift to him from a nobleman whom he knew in Italy, and who had presented it to him a long time before he left his native country. Not being redeemed, the coin was retained by Mr. Connor until his death, which occurred a few years ago, when it was inherited by his son, who, having no appreciation of its value, though perfectly aware of its great rarity, pierced it and wore it for a watch charm till last year, when it was sold to me.

Unfortunately for Woodward, his aureus of Pescennius Niger proved to be a fake. Because William Strobridge had virtually monopolized the field of ancient coinage until his retirement in 1878, one can excuse Woodward's inexperience. Nonetheless, it was an embarrassment which, under the best of circumstances, would have taken time to forget. Always the critic, Frossard was not about to permit time's healing process to take effect. Instead, in the March 1881 issue of

"Numisma", he immortalized the incident with a thinly-veiled allegory entitled "The False Talisman". With our readers' patience, here it is verbatim:

THE FALSE TALISMAN

Let it be known unto the people that there are men both learned and wise who are the possessors of ancient talismans and tokens of gold, silver, and brass, inscribed with the cabalistic signs and characters of kings, princes, and potentates who ruled of old; and these wise and prudent men have stores of these talismans, and keep them in their secret chambers, and set great store by them, and if by reason of trouble and affliction their hearts fail within them, they betake themselves unto their talismans and gaze upon the same, and interpret the signs thereon, and their hearts are cheered as with good tidings, and they come forth like strong men and go on rejoicing.

Now there dwelt in a distant country, called the Land of the Sun, a youth who inherited a vast estate, and ancient talismans in gold and silver and brass without number, and this youth wasted his inheritance and sold his talismans unto the sons of Israel, yea, he sold them all but one, and this one the sons of Israel would not buy, for being wise and learned they interpreted the signs thereon and explained them unto the youth, and said, It is not a true talisman of Pescennius, surnamed Niger, whose superscription it bears, but is false, and the work of a sorcerer, one Becker, who dwelt in the forests of Germania. And the youth put the false talisman (which, through his foolishness was all that was left of his inheritance) unto his bosom, and saith, Peradventure I may find elsewhere a purchaser for this talisman. And he departed from his native land, and took ship, and sailed upon a wide and tempestuous sea, and a storm arising, he and his companions were cast upon a bleak and desolate shore.

Now there came forth one of the chief men of the land, and took him, and made him his slave, and set him to dig canals, him and his companions, and gave them a pittance and a hovel for their abode, and exacted from them a monthly tax. And after a time it came to pass, that because of hard toil disease preyed upon the body of the youth from the Land of the Sun, and he laid him upon his couch, sorely afflicted, for many days, and no one comforted him. And the lord of the canal came unto him, and said: Give me the monthly tax that is due me or I will cast thee into prison. And the youth arose from his couch, and fell at his master's feet, and saith: Behold, my lord, my substance is exhausted, and I have nothing to satisfy thy demand, save a talisman of gold worth one thousand pieces of silver, bequeathed unto me by my father in my native land; and if thou wilt set me free from this bondage and let me return to my native land, I will give it thee. Then pulled he forth the false talisman, and gave it unto his master, and forthwith found favor in his eyes, and his master released him from his bond, and from his tax, and gave unto him a hundred pieces of silver, and the youth took ship, and returned to his native land, and bought a vineyard, and took unto himself a wife, even the daughter of a prince, and grew wise and prosperous.

But the lord of the canal saith, Behold I have a talisman of great price, and I will sell the same, and enlarge my possessions, and buy mules, and houses, and an estate. Now there dwelt not far from him a mighty man, a soothsayer and apothecary, one versed in the knowledge of the talismans of his own country, who bought and sold the same, and whose name was known throughout the length and breadth of the land. And the lord of the canal took a sharp instrument, and bored a hole through the talisman, and hung it with a golden chain around his neck, and mounted his mule, and rode to the apothecary, and showed him the talisman. And the apothecary went into his secret chamber, and took a book of chronicles of the Kings of Gaul, wherein are recorded the names of all the mighty rulers and potentates who coined talismans in days of old, and behold on a certain page in the book was written the name of Pescennius, surnamed Niger, and the apothecary did read, and his understanding was enlightened, for he saw it recorded that the priceless talisman of Pescennius, surnamed Niger, had been stolen from the King's treasury, and that the robbers had fled to a foreign land, and he saith unto himself, In verity this talisman is the same that was stolen from the treasury of the king of Gaul, behold it is of great price and value. Then came he forth and spoke unto the lord of the

canal and saith, I will give thee for this talisman five hundred pieces of silver; and he spread a feast unto him, yea beans and pork, (for the flesh of the swine is not accounted impure in that country) and gave unto him a drink from the fountain of living waters that is in the southwest corner of his shop, and they ate, and drank, and were merry. And when the feast was ended the lord of the canal took the money, even the five hundred pieces of silver, and bestrode his mule, and returned unto his native place.

Now the apothecary had many other talismans in gold, and silver, and brass, and he forthwith issued a proclamation unto the people of the land, wherein was an enumeration of the talismans and of the names of the Kings, rulers, and potentates that made them in days of old, and he told the people that on a certain day he would sell the talismans unto them. And he went to a large city on the border of the sea, where dwelt the sons of Knicker, and spread his treasures before them, the talismans, and the jewels, and the precious stones, the pearls and opals and rings and amulets, and likewise the books. Now the children of Knicker looked upon all these previous things and said one to another, Yea, they are good to behold and of great virtue, and we will buy thereof and enrich our treasures, and for the talisman of Pescennius, surnamed Niger, we will give unto the apothecary one thousand, nay perchance two thousand pieces of fine silver, and it shall be our chief talisman, and we will keep it in our chief chamber, with sentinels to watch over it day and night, lest it be stolen from us as it was from the King of Gaul. But there dwelt among the children of Knicker a stranger from the distant land of the Parisii, a man wise and learned in the interpretation of talismans of ancient Kings and rulers, and when they showed him the talisman of Pescennius, surnamed Niger, he shrugged his shoulders after the manner of the people of his own land.

Now the children of Knicker were wise after their generation, and they interpreted this and said: It is not a true talisman of Pescennius, surnamed Niger, but is false. And on the day appointed for the sale the apothecary stood before the children of Knicker, and the high steward, who was the custodian of the talismans and other precious things, sat on a throne and called out the number of each talisman, and the children of Knicker sat on the ground before him, and spread out their money, and each talisman was given to the one who offered the highest price. And the children of Knicker, and the people of distant towns, who had gathered together, freely purchased the talismans of the Angli, and of the Galli, and Americani of the high steward, but when he called out the talisman of Pescennius, surnamed Niger, and on a plater of pure alabaster held the same before them, they remained silent, and would not offer their silver for the same.

Then did the apothecary marvel and saith: Will ye not give me even one thousand pieces of silver for this rare and precious talisman? And one of them, a man fearless and strong, their spokesman, arose and spoke unto the apothecary with a loud voice and saith: "It is bogus," which signifieth false. Then did the apothecary perceive his error, and he saw that the talisman was false, and he was an angered with himself for his foolishness, by which he had lost much money, even five hundred pieces of silver, and he forthwith betook himself unto his own country, and returned to his shop, and put the false talisman in a crucible, and took a brazen pestle in his right hand, and with one mighty blow broke he the false talisman of Pescennius, surnamed Niger, into a thousand pieces, and scattered the dust thereof on a field behind his dwelling, and put on sackcloth and ashes and fasted and mourned for seven days and seven nights. And when the days of his fasting were over he stood by the fountain of living waters, that is in the southwest corner of his shop, and took an oath upon the same, and said: The talismans of Pescennius, surnamed Niger, and other ancient rulers, behold, I am as a babe, and I know nothing, and I will never again buy them, nor sell them, nor harbor them in my house. And he kept his oath, and bought and sold talismans and drugs, and precious ointments, and out of his fountain he sold water to the wayfarers and weary, and he bought and sold the tomahawks and pipes of peace, pearls, and precious stones, and patent medicines, and trafficked much, and abode in his shop, but visited he not again the children of Knicker for a season; and behold the field where he cast the dust of the false talisman became bare and sterile, and is so even to this day.

Whereas most of the hobby derived considerable amusement from Frossard's piece, there was one man who did not. Smoldering in his Roxbury pharmacy, Woodward's first rejoinder was relatively mild. In his April, 1881 catalog of the Clogston Collection, Lot #1307 is a copy of Andrew's excellent work on late date cents. The lot is described thusly:

Lot 1307 A description of 268 varieties of U.S. Cents, 1816-57, in the collection of Frank D. Andrews, 1881.

This unpretending little book of fifty-four pages is the work of an original investigator, and is a real and not a pretended contribution to numismatic science. It may with truth be said of it, "a work of absolute necessity to Collectors of American Copper Coins." With the exception of Maris's "Varieties of the Copper Issues of the United States Mint in the year 1794," and Crosby's account of the Cents of 1793, published with Levick's Plate in the American Journal of Numismatics, and "Appleton's Issues of the Mint of the United States," printed in the same Journal, and reprinted in a small edition, it is the only work that has ever appeared on this specialty of any importance whatever. True, a sumptuous and presumptuous volume has been printed on the subject, but a diligent perusal will convince any person that it is perhaps the only book ever written, from which no new fact could be gleaned. Having carefully read it, I fail to discover in it anything new, except numerous ridiculous blunders of the author, who I judge wrote his book in a hurry, to suit his pictures, and published it under the impression so elegantly expressed by one of his learned coadjutors, that "The Americans are fools and will buy anything."

The "sumptuous and presumptuous volume" is, of course, Frossard's "United States Cents and Half Cents," published in 1879. Woodward's verdict on the work was, most scholars would now agree, tolerably close to the mark. However, his book review must have seemed small recompense for the gross insult offered by "The False Talisman", not to mention a further (if lesser) provocation which appeared in the May, 1881 issue of "Numisma". As the abuse heaped upon him cumulated, Woodward's creative fires began to mount accordingly. At length, they break out into a virtual conflagration, the result being an 1881 version of "Ichabod Crane". This masterpiece of satire appears as a digression to the author's description of Lot #1374 in his auction sale of June, 1881. Regretably, only the early copies of the catalog contain the account. However, no numismatist receiving an early copy could have failed to appreciate that Frossard (of Irvington-on-Hudson) and Ichabod were one and the same:

"Whatever sails up and down the North River, can but be impressed with the picturesque beauties of its shores, — the lofty palisades, the hills and valleys, and the distant mountains, so impress their features on the mind of the voyager, that the lovely picture can never be erased.

Every reader of history as related by that delightful and veracious chronicler, Diedrich Knickerbocker, knows by heart the biography of Rip Van Winkle, particularly the account of his protracted slumber; and the traveller who visits the Kaatskills and has pointed out to him the exact spot of Rip's long repose, as he voyages leisurely down the river and comes abreast of that little hyphenated village on the Eastern shore, if its somnolent influence does not overcome him, is immediately impressed with the idea that Rip, if he had any notion of taking a long sleep, ought to have crossed the river, dropped down to that little burg and there fallen asleep; for had he done so, his nap might have been uninterrupted for a century at least.

Now it happens that the same historian records the life and adventures of Ichabod Crane.

He not only treats us to a charming picture of Ichabod as schoolmaster, as playmate of the boys and girls, but he gives us an insight into his love affairs: he tells us how Ichabod, invited to a quilting frolic, borrowed a nag of Hans Van Ripper, and went wooing the buxom daughter of old Baltus Van Tassel; how he was jilted by the fair Katrina, and chased on horseback on his way home by a fearful spectre, who carried his head in his hand; how, just as the luckless schoolmaster crossed the keystone of the bridge over which, it is generally believed, goblins and witches cannot pass — and we pause to remark that this philosophical view is greatly strengthened by the history of Tam O'Shanter's midnight ride* — the goblin rider, with one mighty effort, threw his head at the poor retreating pedagogue, who, though he sought by dodging to avoid the missile, was felled to the earth. The horse of Van Ripper was found in the morning at his master's door; the saddle, which fell off in the race, was found trampled and torn by the heavy hoofs of the goblin horse, but Ichabod never more was seen. True, our historian intimates that the weird, headless horseman was no other than Brom Bones, Ichabod's rival with the blue-eyed Katrina, — that the head, which we, as students of the occult sciences, know was fleshless and bloody, — was but a harmless pumpkin, and that Ichabod simply ran away; that he afterwards became a lawyer, an editor, and what not, and traded and grew rich, and went to the Legislature. All this, however, is mere surmise, authenticated by no shadow of evidence. Up to this point the history of Ichabod Crane, like that of Rip Van Winkle, is without a break or a flaw, — the relation is in each case, as it were, a chain of evidence; each fact supports and strengthens every other fact, but it is quite clear that from the moment the bridge was crossed, history failed and imagination filled its place.

Recent events have, in a measure, however, cleared up the mystery. There appeared, a few years ago, at Sleepy Hollow, a gentleman, the very counterpart of Ichabod, somewhat rounded out, to be sure, from his former angular proportions, but still bearing enough of his peculiarities of character and appearance to make the likeness observable if not unmistakable. On his arrival, which was by way of Castle Garden, this gentleman settled down immediately into Ichabod's profession of pedagogue. We hasten to present the facts and to the development of our theory; further on we shall offer evidence in its support more conclusive by far than that by which the existence of Symmes's Hole has been demonstrated.**

Little more than twenty years ago it became necessary to repair the bridge over the haunted stream which Ichabod crossed on that fateful night, — the stream near Wiley's Swamp, for a full account of which we refer to *Diedrich's History*. When, on the second day, the workman renewed their labors in the morning, a plank was removed near the edge of the stream and at the end of the bridge, and under the plank, wonderful to relate, were found impressed in the hard earth the exact form and outline of Ichabod Crane, — the small flat head, the huge, long ears, the lanky arms and legs, the flat feet, which might have served for shovels, all were there as in a picture, and more wonderful than all, the hole was still warm, — and scarcely a doubt existed in the minds of the workmen, to whom the facts of Ichabod's disappearance were well known, that, awakened by the operations of the day before, he had risen in the night and taken himself off. So far it was all clear to the minds of those serving men; but how Ichabod could have been concealed there for all the long years, was not so certain. Just here science and philosophy come in. It is clear that when Ichabod was struck by the ghastly skull, he was stunned; in his pain and terror he crawled under the bridge, — here he fell asleep. The influence of the headless horseman — for an account of whom we again make reference to our historian, — the nature of the haunted brook, the close proximity of Andre's tree, † and the drowsy character of all around him, did the rest; and here, all unknown to the historian, was repeated the phenomenon of the Kaatskills; something the like of which never happened and never will happen except on the lovely sleep shores of the North River.‡

It was not for some years after the event so minutely described, that the strange new comer appeared at Sleepy Hollow, and, as all the friends and pupils of Ichabod had passed away, the appearance of identity was not observed by any of his neighbors, and the great discovery was finally perfected by a man from Boston, a place famed for inventions and great discoveries; principal among the inventions is ranked — no allusion to the pork-baked beans, but amongst the discoveries the one here chronicled "takes the cake".

The stranger that was, though a comparatively long residence makes him a stranger no longer, — this sentence seems a little mixed, but the reader is assured there is no pun here, if he expects to find one, — has been numerously interviewed, but he wisely keeps his own counsel as to all that concerns his hybernation. He is fond of talking about his residence in Parree, a place that none of his neighbors know anything about, but which they suppose is over in Jersey, and after dinner he sometimes boasts of being in the army during the late war, — which he says he entered as a non com. and from which he emerged as a Colonel, with shoulder straps, brass buttons, and things. When his back is turned the neighbors pityingly tap their foreheads and say the non com.††† part is evident enough now, but we “can’t see” the Colonel. For getting his love of the last century, if he be the veritable Ichabod, he has taken a wife, one of the fair daughters of the Empire State; he has become an editor and an author, and his fame now extends from Irvington-on-Hudson all the way to Harlem and back again. Men know him generally as the sage of Sleepy Hollow, but if any title next to Colonel — which by a pleasing fiction he still clings to — pleases him best, it is that of Contributor to American Numismatic History.

That the sage and historian is the successor in office of Ichabod Crane, is established beyond peradventure; that he is the original, some ignorant, unphilosophical men may doubt, but with due respect to other men’s prejudices and superstitions, we avow our own unwavering belief in our own theory that the sage is the original, sleeping, it is true, for a long time, but now redivious. By this theory as an article of faith and practice, we shall abide.”

* For the facts concerning this event we refer to the great Scottish historian, Bobby Burns.

** Symmes’s Theory of Concentric Spheres, demonstrating that the earth is hollow, — habitable within, and widely open at the poles. 12 mo. Cincinnati, 1826.

† We must not interrupt the narrative; but for a full account of all the interesting events, places, etc. to which we make only the briefest allusion, we refer once more and finally, to the old chronicler Knickerbocker, whose works can be found in the Boston Public Library, the Astor Library, and it may be in other repositories of learning.

‡ If it happens that a strange proclivity to lying and fondness for dirt, has been observed in our hero, it may perhaps be accounted for by his long continued lying in the dirt. This explanatory suggestion can but commend itself to the metaphysical mind.

††† Non Com. in the vernacular is short for Non Compos Mentis, in which sense the neighbors use it; just what our hero means by it he has never explained.

“Ichabod” does not end the exchange between Frossard and Woodward. However, from the artistic standpoint, it is certainly the climax of the feud and, therefore, the best basis on which to rest the case which we began so many pages ago.

If you have any contributions, questions, or letters, please send your mail to your editors:

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A REVIEW OF HALF CENT LITERATURE

by *Walter H. Breen*

Compared with the extensive bibliographical material on large cents, there has been very little published on half-cents. I take this fact to reflect, among collectors even as among the general public, a general lack of interest. The half-cent has been something of a poor relative of the cent from its earliest years, in minting techniques, in design, in half-hearted attempts at forced circulation, in small mintages and smaller acceptance. Poor relatives, however, sometimes do turn out to be Cinderellas, just as ugly ducklings occasionally do grow up to be swans; and perhaps the half-cent is an instance of the kind. Growing appreciation of the denomination appears to be reflected in the literature. A critical review follows.

We might as well begin with the earliest source book extant, not published but available for consultation in the National Archives. This is the *Cent Book 1796-1803*, a workbook kept by the Coiner's Department (Henry Voigt and Adam Eckfeldt). Its importance here is in testifying to minting techniques, specifically the different ones used for half-cents and for cents. In every instance half-cents appear to have been an afterthought, planchets or blanks for them being cut down from copper tokens or misstruck cents in several different years and therefore varying considerably in weight and durability.

Successive printed Annual Reports of the Director of the Mint, 1795-1857, testify to general lack of interest in the denomination, small mintages, and several long periods of discontinuance — though neither the Mint Director nor even the President, but only Congress, has authority to suspend coinage of any denomination. Some of these successive reports also exist in fair copies (handwritten) in the National Archives. In addition, there are hundreds of documents in the Archives, especially 1811-57, relevant to half-cents, though less than for most other denominations. These are primary sources for the often incredible history of the Mint's carelessness in coining and bookkeeping procedures, of the suspension of half-cent coinage in 1811, of the stockpiling of 1829-48 which produced many years of proof-only mintages, and of repeated official attempts to abolish the denomination.

The very earliest numismatic books aimed at the general public gave comparatively little space to the half-cent other than to quote mintage figures from Director's Reports and to show how the designs followed those of the cents. These include items such as the Eckfeldt and BuBois *Manuals*, Hickcox's *History of American Coinage* (Albany, N.Y., 1858), which mentions patterns having been struck in 1813 — a story apparently completely imaginary — and the *Mint Manual* of James Ross Snowden, which created a brief fad or craze for coin collecting in the 1860's. Snowden, incidentally, is our only source for the information that the majority of the 1857 half-cents were melted down at the Mint; and even he gave no clue as to the number or weight of the coins melted.

Dr. Montroville W. Dickeson, whom *Time* once called "a Burton Holmes of the 1860's", compiled his *American Numismatic Manual* as a guide to collectors of all American series, and saw it become a best seller, going into three editions (1859, 1860, 1865). The collector's bible of its own day, and — like most bibles — crammed

full of errors, Dickeson's book nevertheless gave information not then elsewhere available, and attempted a coverage of American numismatics so comprehensive as not to be equalled within a single pair of covers to the present day. What he did was to attempt to comprise in a single book the material (or as much as he could get of it) later to be elaborated by Crosby on colonials, Sheldon on large cents, various other writers on silver and gold coins, etc., together with a treatise on American Indian artifacts which might have had some monetary use. One can admire the man's ambition while deploring the errors — though to be sure the refined methods of comparison necessary for study of some series did not exist in his day, some not having been developed until the last decade. He deserves commendation for a pioneering effort.

One of the oddest stories to have been recorded by Dickeson, nevertheless, failed to get into any of the three editions of his book. It is that of the teen-aged Joseph J. Mickley's discovery of the dies later used to make the 1811 half-cent restrike. This story is found in an unsigned undated manuscript volume, bought by the ANS museum in Thomas L. Elder's auction of July 18, 1913, lot 181, filed under *Miscellany*.

A few collectors assembled specialized groups of half-cents. Mickley was one of them. His collection was auctioned by W. Elliot Woodward in 1867. A review of the Mickley sale — until then probably the greatest coin auction yet held in the United States — appeared in Ebenezer Mason's *Coin & Stamp Collector's Magazine* January, 1868. On page 34 of the review appear comments on the anomalous 1797 lettered-edge half-cent, beginning long speculation that the variety might have been struck on left-over blanks from 1795 (as many specimens are unusually heavy, approaching the pre-1795 weight standard), or might even have been intended as a pattern or experimental piece. This appears to have begun a trend: many publications in the following 70 to 80 years relating to half-cents have emphasized speculation about the mysteries of the issue, mysteries not all entirely cleared up to the present day.

The Philadelphia Quaker physician, Dr. Edward Maris, in 1869 issued a small pamphlet devoted to *The U.S. Copper Issues of the Year 1794*. Mainly devoted to large cents, it nevertheless covered varieties of half-cents, and it is the first systematic attempt at description of them. (There is a very rare second edition of this brochure, dated 1870, including some new cent varieties but no new half-cents.) Maris had a keen eye for minute differences, but was apparently unaware that a hub was used to make three of the 1794 obverses and three of the reverses. He learned quickly enough about hubs, though: in the January 1871 *American Journal of Numismatics*, p. 59, he cited a dent in the hair showing up on all, or almost all, half-cent obverses from 1841 through 1857, in the identical spot — proof that it was an injury to the hub rather than to individual coins. In the same article he went into some detail about distinguishing restrikes from originals in the rare proof-only years by the size of the berries, thus triggering a controversy not settled until the appearance of my original manuscript as to the status and probable issue time of certain varieties.

In 1879 Edouard Frossard, a coin dealer with enthusiasm far in excess of his

command of English, published his *Monograph of U.S. Cents and Half-Cents* (Irvington, N.Y., privately printed), based on the collection of some friend or client. It seems to have been the first attempt, after Dickeson, to describe the whole series; unfortunately, variety descriptions later than 1794 are useless or all but useless. Only 300 copies were issued, but pirated reprints appeared. Unlike the somewhat similar *Illustrated History* based on the Dr. J. Hewitt Judd collection, the Frossard Monograph does not appear to have been a fixed-price sale offering, and the historical and numismatic information contained therein did represent the “state of the art” as of his own day.

This was quickly followed, as though in reaction, by a serial article *The Coins of the United States*, in the J.W. Scott *Coin Collector's Journal* from 1879 through 1883. This was highly systematic and long remained a basic reference. The serial broke off after describing half-cents and cents (in part), the materials for its continuation being turned over, for reasons still unknown, to one Francis Worcester Doughty, a hack writer specializing in books for boys, who reprinted the cent part of the serial under his own name in 1890. Doughty seems to have cared little for cents, specializing rather in coins depicting elephants. The original serial is credited to David Proskey, an extremely astute dealer who quickly suffered unpopularity and libelous attacks in various quarters, partly because of his association with J.W. Scott, partly from his outspoken opinions. Frossard, for instance, bitterly attacked Proskey, Scott, the CCJ and most of the catalogues in his own house organ *Numisma* — receiving much the same treatment in return. Frossard's pet name for Scott was “The N.Y. Great Boaster”, and for Proskey “that nice-looking young man with a big india-rubber conscience” — for what peccadilloes nobody now knows. Proskey numbers for half-cents have been superseded by Gilbert numbers although Proskey managed to escape some of the more egregious errors picked up in the Gilbert book.

George W. Rice printed a series of garrulous comments on half-cents, specifically on the large-berry and small-berry restrikes and originals of 1852 and other years, in the February 1895 *Numismatist*; this article was reprinted in the 1937 volume (vol. 50, p. 298). His speculations showed that he was on the right track, but the information necessary to solve the problem of the 1852's was not available until the late 1950's. The coin dealer Charles Steigerwalt made a more closely reasoned dissertation in the August 1906 *Numismatist*, p. 277, someone else in the February 1907 issue, and still others in the letter columns of later issues; this topic became for awhile nearly as popular as speculations about the origin of the existing “1804” dollars.

In the July 1897 *American Journal of Numismatics*, Sylvester Sage Crosby, the Boston watchmaker-turned-numismatic scholar directed his attention to the varieties of the 1793 half-cent. The information there published was repeated in his privately printed *The U.S. Coinage of 1793* (1897 with various pirated reprints). The four varieties of 1793 are described and pictured, but without indication of emission sequence or rarity; and in the book version, the fake Washington half-cent of 1793 is included, as a pattern, despite its extremely questionable history — a history that Crosby might have known about. In all likelihood either Crosby was

including it as a favor to his friend William Sumner Appleton, who owned one of the two extant specimens, or else he honestly believed in error that the thing was genuine, presumably having seen only electrotype copies rather than either of the two original fabrications.

Charles Steigerwalt returned to the question of half-cent varieties, this time of 1794, in the 1908 *Numismatist*, p. 176, managing to describe eight of the nine known die combinations. His publication in what was by then the most widely read numismatic periodical of the day may have inspired those to follow.

Dr. George R. Ross, of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, published a serial article on half-cent varieties in the *Numismatist* during 1915-1917. Evidently independent of the Ebenezer Gilbert effort, it is in some ways better, in some ways not as good. This is the same G.R. Ross who also issued studies of New Jersey and Connecticut coppers; his contributions, important in their own day, have been almost forgotten, unjustly so. He was one of the more accurate students of the early American copper coinages.

Ebenezer Gilbert completed a very uneven manuscript on the whole series of half-cents and managed to get New York coin dealer Thomas L. Elder to publish it in 1916. Despite the earlier work of Ross and Proskey, both in some ways superior, this book quickly became the standard reference — most probably because of its photographic plates. Elder later issued a one-page supplement describing a second variety of 1831, “Gilbert 1A”, mistakenly thought for a long time to be the “real” original of the year despite its having the 1836 reverse in both perfect and broken states. Your copy of the Gilbert book, if original, ought to have the supplement tipped in; unfortunately, many copies now known lack it, some having been bound after Elder’s death from previously unbound warehouse copies. There have been several pirated reprints, some marked with new publishing data, others not so marked; in all these the plates are glossy and much thinner than on the originals. The original edition has larger pages than do any of the reprints, though they vary in margin size; my copy is 9 x 12, others may have been trimmed down, but the key to its being an original is the quality of the plates, which are matte contact prints clear everywhere except at the margins of three or four. All editions include the same plate errors: there is no 1806 Gilbert 2 obverse illustrated, a second Gilbert 1 being shown instead; the reverses of 1805 Gilbert 3 and 4 are actually of two Gilbert 3’s. The Gilbert book long remained the standard reference, despite lacking a rational emission sequence, lacking reasonable historical material, lacking a usable rarity scale, and having inaccurate descriptions, typographical errors which in some cases destroyed the meaning of the sentences containing them, and plate errors. Gilbert appears to have had access to a first-rate collection (probably that of F.R. Alvord) and therefore the materials for a good reference work, but he must have been dreadfully pressured to rush into print. Possibly the appearance of the Ross serial, which he nowhere mentions, induced him to do here what he had earlier done with the 1794 and 1796 cents.

The Alvord collection, mentioned a moment ago, was legendary in its own day, even as the Brobston, Showers and Norweb collections have become. S. Hudson Chapman, long after his break with his brother Henry, catalogued the collection for auction in Philadelphia, June 9, 1924. S.H. Chapman was not even the historian

that his brother Henry had been, and his memory was still less reliable, but at least he had the good sense to illustrate all the important rarities from this collection. For the most part his comments in the catalogue are accurate -- probably because of notations made by Mr. Alvord. Here, for the first time, the "Gilbert 2" of 1795 is discredited as a fraud. It had fooled Gilbert, who may never have taken the time to examine the piece close up.

There were various other collections of half-cents formed and dispersed in the two decades following the Alvord sale, but nothing of equal importance. The late Joseph Brobston, an executive of -- if memory serves -- the Hercules Powder Co., formed one of the five or six all time great collections, and about 1949-50 developed the ambition to write a book replacing Gilbert's. It did get far enough to be the subject of a slide-talk before the Philadelphia Coin Club in 1950. I met him in that year, partly as a result of his published appeal for information on that series. His researches were mostly based on examination of coins, notation of their frequency of appearance, and reports of prices realized at auctions during the 1940's. Brobston never published his findings and his collection was sold at fixed prices by Stack's in a 1963 catalogue. There were also a dozen bound presentation copies issued that included actual photographic plates.

From 1952 through 1960, I wrote most of the auction sales for New Netherlands Coin Co. and contributed information for the few that have since then appeared. I contributed part of the information appearing in the so-called "Anderson Dupont" auction of 1954. (There was never a person of that name; the name referred to Charles Anderson and Charles Dupont, two intermediaries who obtained the collection in 1954. The collection's original owner, a Massachusetts estate of fabulous wealth and antiquity, has not been disclosed to date.) The Hillyer Ryder collection, retained almost intact by Wayte Raymond, was auctioned in 1954 by New Netherlands and the descriptions therein included an early version of my numbering system -- since changed owing to the discovery of new varieties. Wayte Raymond in 1954 published several monographs by me, including *The U.S. Patterns of 1792* and *The U. S. Minor Coinages 1793-1916*, as part of his *Coin Collector's Journal* series. The 1792 Patterns monograph was, of course, not devoted to half-cents, but it is mentioned here because in it I identified the engraver of the obverse dies of the 1793 half-cent as the same man who cut the obverse of the 1792 Disme, the engraver of the 1793 reverses as the engraver of the reverses of the 1793 single-bow wreath cents, and specifically mentioned Joseph Wright and Adam Eckfeldt.

Arlie Slabaugh issued an article on assembling a type collection of half-cents in the July 1951 *Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine*, repeating the older errors current in his day. Dr. J. Hewitt Judd, using about a twentieth of the information I had supplied him and his sometime collaborator William Guild (one of my oldest friends), published a revision of the Adams-Woodin book on pattern and experimental pieces, including several odd half-cents: my 1795 overstrike on a copper trialpiece of a 1794 half-dollar (though in error illustrating it over the one next mentioned), Prof. Charles Ruby's similar overstrike on a copper trialpiece of a 1795 half-dollar, and the 1854 and 1856 copper-nickel impressions. He relegated the 1793 and

"1806" Washington items to an appendix on forgeries. I published two new varieties in the December 1953 *Numismatic Scrapbook*, pp. 1170-1171, but contrary to expectation they were not followed up with a flood of additional examples.

Q. David Bowers and James F. Ruddy issued a revision of Gilbert, using in part information derived from auction catalogues written by me or in turn drawing on information derived from me. The book is titled *United States Half Cents 1793-1857* (Creative Printing, Johnson City, N.Y., 1962); it contains no historical information, merely a listing of varieties.. My disagreements with it are minor.

Editor's note: The above article was written circa 1966, and was extracted from the unpublished manuscript on United States Half Cents written by the author. It is published here for the first time, with the gracious permission of the author. Any half-cent literature which has appeared since 1966 has not been discussed herewith.

AUCTION CATALOGS DOMINATE

KATEN DELAWARE SALE

The 52nd Auction Sale by Frank and Laurese Katen held in conjunction with the MANA convention produced high prices, particularly auction catalogs.

The four Gillette sales by George Bauer estimated at \$40.00 fetched \$85.00 on a bid of \$220.00. Bluestone catalogs doubled and tripled estimates of \$10.00-\$20.00; Bolender catalogs normally priced at \$15.00 doubled estimates; Wayte Raymond catalogs were equally strong in number of bids and prices realized.

Stack's catalogs have been increasing in value over the last two years, but this sale produced exceptional advances. Most small catalogs brought \$15.00-\$18.00 with many exceptions as high as \$45.00.

Part four of the Wylie Hoard of early United States Auction Catalogs being offered as duplicates of previous sales brought strong prices, in some instances, exceeding previous highs. A copy of Loubat, "The Medalllic History of the United States of America 1776-1876" published in 1878, brought \$170.00 on an estimate of \$150.00.

Lot 1557, a Rollin and Feuardant auction sale of 1887, the collection of Ponton d'Amecourt erroneously listed an estimate of \$50.00, was sold on the floor for \$575.00. The last lot, 1558, Spink sale of 1911 catalogued by Leonard Forrer, fetched \$150.00 on an estimate of \$100.00.

Next sale by the Katens will be held April 25-26, 1981, in conjunction with the TriClub second annual convention.

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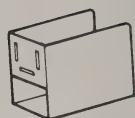
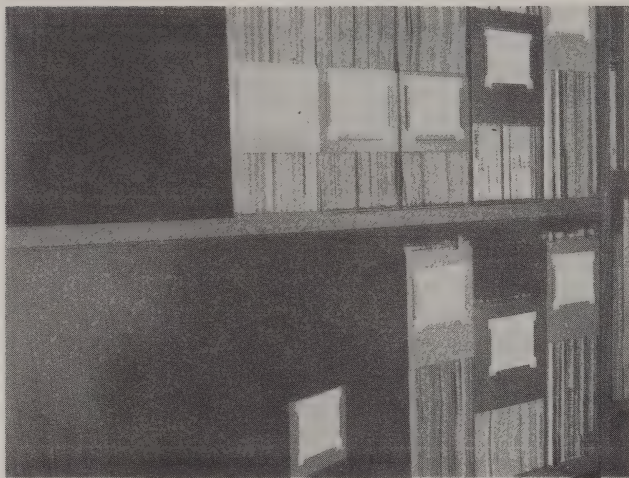
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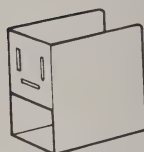
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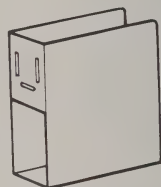
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Quarterly Journal of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society

Volume I, Number 4

Summer 1981

CONCLUSION OF TALK BY "LEATHER FREAK"

JOHN J. FORD, JR. AT 1980 ANA BIBLIOMANIA MEETING

There are so many angles in discussing numismatic literature that it's hard to know which direction to pursue in the time given. Rather than ramble on, and encourage some of you to get up and go for a walk, does anybody have any questions which might lead to a little discussion?

DICK JOHNSON: Let's say you were giving this speech fifty years from now. You get up before a group of numismatists. All of us here love books, some of us have written books. . . .

FORD: Me? Up in fifty years? You have longevity pills or something?

JOHNSON: Wait until I get to the punch line. Okay. We all love books. We all know what's going on in the library field of book publishing. What would we be looking at fifty years from now? Would we be sitting at a console and getting all our information from a centralized computer, located perhaps at ANA headquarters? Think ahead and then look back.

FORD: That's so difficult Dick. Technology changes so fast. I don't think that the book as we have known it, or as the world has known it for many hundreds of years, is going to disappear. A very close friend of mine (he's in this room) is already putting numismatic data into a computer with tremendous success. However, the type of information he's putting into the computer lends itself to being computerized. I'm collecting data, for instance, on assayers. I'm making up form sheets with the years from 1850 to 1900 going down the column on one side, then it has space for names and addresses and locations, and where I get the information, across. The trouble with the computer is that every time that you want the information, you have to run a print-out. This gets a little complicated.

What really bothers me about where we will be fifty years from now is the poor quality of the paper used to print most of the books today. According to authorities in the Library of Congress, there is a self-destruct fabric built into the paper that's being used today. John Satenstein, my son-in-law, is here tonight. He's in the publishing business and he is very well acquainted with paper.

Going to extremes, we have the world coin and paper money catalogues published by Krause, which are printed on pulp. Well, they have to come out with a new edition every year because after two or three years the paper will start to go. It will be like a copy of *Coin World*. If you want to save an article from *Coin World* and keep it in pristine condition, you have to de-acidify it or have it reprinted on paper with less acid content. Because of the cost today of composition, printing, labor, binding, and everything else, including our economic situation, there is a tendency towards using cheap paper. The idea is to sell a lot of books to a lot of people, without giving a damn whether they will last. I'm wondering how many books that you buy for ten, twenty or thirty dollars will last for fifty years. Now, if you keep them in a dry place, and at a temperature of around sixty-five degrees with low humidity, and you're lucky, they will survive. The pulp publications definitely will not. The acidic content is just too high. I've saved clippings from *Coin World* going back to 1960. The ones that I've kept in folders are very fragile, but they have maintained their color. The ones that have laid on stacks in folders exposed to the air are now brittle, and I have to make Xeroxes very carefully and destroy the originals. The Xerox, of course, is on bond paper with at least some rag content, so it will last as long as I will. Where we are going I can't tell you.

I have a close relationship with the Barrow shop which specializes in the treatment and preservation of paper. They have worked, for example, on the United States Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. It might interest you to know that in 1940, some nitwit working for the United States Government, where a lot of nitwits end up, "repaired" the Constitution of the United States with Scotch tape! The glue used in the original Minnesota Mining Scotch Tape breaks down chemically and the oil leaches into the paper. The tape itself can be removed by using acetone or toluene but the stain is extremely difficult to remove. The Barrow people have discovered a way to do it but it is extremely dangerous. The chemicals used have to be heated to a certain temperature. If they are overheated by a few degrees, the chemicals reach flash point, and a few degrees above that and boom! The windows go out. Maybe you go out.

I bought a magnificent copy of Low's work on Hard Times tokens, the second edition, with the supplement. It had a couple of tears in it and they were mended with Scotch tape. Now, I've got to do something about that. And you say, "Well, come on. Get rid of it. Sell it to some guy that doesn't know what Scotch tape is." Well, I can't do that. Why? I've got Lyman Low's own copy, with his corrections in it. It's loaded with newspaper clippings and old ads. It's a priceless book, and it has to be preserved. So down to Barrow it has to go, and they have to take the Scotch tape off.

MARGO RUSSELL: John, I would like to remind everybody that *Coin World* is on microfilm.

FORD: Well, between you and me (and I don't mean to be disparaging), I don't like microfilm. I've used it. I've used it in Birmingham. I've used it in London. I've used it in Washington. I've used it in New York. I find it awkward. There's something "mechanical" about it; I don't know what it is. I prefer to have the book

or pamphlet. I like bindings. I'm not going to mention the kind of bindings again, because there are clowns waiting for another opportunity. I just like books!

If there is something in *Coin World* that is super, as I said before, I'll Xerox it on the best paper available. If it's something outstanding, and it's been reprinted, I try very hard to get a copy of the reprint. John Satenstein has told me that a lot of coated stock is really crummy paper protected. It is coated for two reasons: It gives a much better rendition of halftones; the dots look a lot better sitting on top of the coating, rather than soaking into the normally porous paper and getting muddy looking. And on top of that, the coating keeps the air away from the high acid content paper inside, which retards the self-destruction process. For these two basic reasons I would, if I were in the publishing business, print 200 or 500 copies of any book I published on *Permatext*. It's an expensive paper but it's guaranteed to last 500 to 1000 years, or at least it's chemically inert. Once the book is on the press, feeding in a different paper is just a question of a little adjustment and a little work. The important thing is that copies would survive.

Unfortunately, a lot of people in the publishing business are in it primarily, no, completely, to make money. The results bother me. You can see it in the bindings. Now, I'm not referring to the fact that it's covered with the cheapest possible imitation leather, or that it doesn't have tail bands, or even the fact that the paper is crummy. The binding is such that if you open the book and try to lay it flat so that you can read it, the thing wants to close itself. If you really flatten it out, you spring the binding. You break it. The next time you pick it up, the pages fall out.

GUEST: Isn't that a "perfect" binding?

FORD: Well, there is a type of binding called a "perfect" binding. The regular Garrett sale catalogues, for example, are perfect bound. Now, perfect binding lies flat, but, unfortunately, it cannot be mishandled. I thought that the Garrett catalogues were well done, but not done well enough to take the abuse of constant use. Perfect bindings are now sewn. The spine is glued together with an additive along the edge, which permits it to lay flat. A sewn binding will lay flat and withstand heavy use.

All of these things are expensive. The name of the game today is to make money. Now, that gets to pricing. The problem is that you need distribution. If you went to college, it's called marketing. The technique today is to gauge what the potential market is. Then, you put a telephone number price on the book, so that you can sell it for fifty percent off to the dealer, who then resells it for double his cost. Now, the dealer (Boy, do I like dealers!) wants to make more money than the guy that wrote the book. He wants to make more money than the guy who printed the book. He wants to make more money than the guy who published the book. What does he do for all this? He just *schlepps* the book to somebody and takes the money. It means that the middle man makes more money than the authors. I think that the authors and the publishers need more encouragement than the peddlers, so that we can get more and better books. Walter Breen, for instance, wrote a terrific book on United States proof coins. I'm sure that Walter had nothing to do with the marketing of the book. He authored the book. He probably proofread it. He

probably went over the illustrations. The quality of the book is very good, and it's a heck of a book. Everybody interested in United States coins should own a copy. However, the distribution of that book was weird. If you subscribed to somebody's numismatic advisory service, you could get a free copy of Walter's book. Someone else would sell you a whole bunch of books, most of which was garbage, but if you bought it all, you would get a copy of Walter's book. We don't have a nice, clean system of distribution of new books.

Then, you can go to the other extreme. For example, somebody recently wrote a book on the Bank of Pensacola, Florida. It covered everything to do with banking in Pensacola, including obsolete banknotes, national banknotes, the banks themselves, pictures of the banks, a map of the city, the whole works. The author published this out of his own pocket, and printed 250 or 500 copies. He sent a notice to *Coin World*, ran a little ad somewhere, and sold them direct. No distributors, no brokers, no dealers. Books such as this are hard to find. In my experience, the best books written are the ones written as a labor of love, which are published by the author at his own expense. The worst motivation for publishing a book is pure profit.

Most of the publishing houses don't actually publish their own books. If you go to a big book publisher in New York, you'll find that their operation consists of a couple of offices, some editors, an art director, and a couple of flits. These people talk to you, and they project how many books they can sell, how many in hard-cover, how many in softcover, how many this, how many that. They edit your manuscript, they pick the type, and they go over the illustrations. They do little else beyond that.

I'm involved now in helping a young author who has written a very comprehensive book. He wants to get it published. He went to a major publishing house in New York, and they agreed to do the book. But the publishing house thinks *only* of dollars! This book is arranged with illustrations throughout the text. The publishers want to take all of the illustrations, and put them together on sixteen pages in the middle of the book. Now, that's ridiculous! Right? Everybody agrees that it is ridiculous, but the publisher felt that it was cheaper. And cheaper is the name of the game. He can make more money, the wholesaler can make more money, and the retailer can make more money, and we end up with a crummier book.

On the other hand, the quality of the material coming out today is impressive. For example, the Krause book on world coins is certainly a fantastic reference book. I just wish that every few years Chet would put out an edition of 500 or so copies printed on paper that will last. It might have to sell for fifty or sixty dollars, but I know that I, for one, would certainly buy a copy.

JOHN ADAMS: In 1950, you wrote an article for the *Numismatist* giving rarity information on the twenty-two large-size Chapman catalogues with plates. Walter Breen was the cataloguer for a 1970 Harmer Rooke sale that listed part of the Henry Chapman inventory. In some instances, Walter's rarity data disagrees with yours, and, in other cases, my experiences with the Chapman catalogues are in conflict with both of your findings.

WALTER BREEN: I will clue you, John. An awful lot of that material was edited or modified from my own cataloguing by Don Taxay, who, at that time, headed the firm of Harmful, Crook — excuse me, Harmer, Rooke and Company. I mean, then it was ghastly! I was left with a nervous breakdown. They tried to get me to come back, but I said that I couldn't afford another breakdown.

ADAMS: So, you claim no pride in authoring the catalogue?

BREEN: None whatever!

ADAMS: What about your data, John?

FORD: My data of thirty years ago reflects the knowledge and experience of a twenty-six-year-old "expert". I collected Chapman catalogues, and my rarity comments in the August 1950 *Numismatist* were predicated upon two things: the number of catalogues that were remaining in Henry Chapman's inventory when the estate was purchased by Edmund Rice in 1948, and my own experience from roughly 1946 to 1950 in trying to find various copies to complete my set. I didn't complete my own set until 1951, and, strangely enough, the last one I got, the Baldwin, was not that rare. Since then, I've seen quite a few Baldwin's.

There was an article in *COINage Magazine* a month or two back about the ten most valuable United States coins. The article was crummy, but it illustrated the fact that we confuse "most valuable" with "rarest". And I confused it in 1950. In that respect, my article was also crummy. The rarest Chapman catalogue is not necessarily the most valuable as a research tool. Are we going to value a catalogue based upon how difficult it is to find, or upon how useful it is to some dealer who wants it to use in properly describing an obscure item.

Some of the rarest United States auction catalogues are worthless to the researcher. I can think of an 1858 sale that said, "1793. Cent....1805. Cent," and so forth. My God! It says nothing. Even priced, it still says nothing, because the coins sold for three cents.

Now, in my experience, the Chapman catalogue that I use the most is the Bushnell sale. This catalogue is loaded with the most obscure tokens and medals, and items that you can't find anyplace else. I have two copies of the Bushnell sale with buyers' names written in. One is Henry Chapman's bid book, and the other was Dave Proskey's auction room copy. Proskey not only wrote down who bought the lots, but also whether the guy was a jerk or a drunk. His written comments were hilarious.

In 1951, I wrote an article for the *Coin Collectors Journal*, solely on the Chapmans' sale of the Bushnell collection. To give you an idea of how different it was from the Garrett sales or Auction '80, the first thing that they did in an auction sale back in 1882, which was the year that the Bushnell sale took place, was to cover the entire floor with canvas. Now, if Walter Breen knew about this, he never would have gone to one of those sales! After the floor was covered, they would bring in all the chairs. Then, they would bring in two spittoons for each row. Ninety percent of the people who attended the Bushnell sale chewed tobacco. They didn't smoke

pipes or cigars; they chewed. And the great sport was aiming for the spittoon. The canvas, obviously, was there to protect the carpeting. Bidders sitting in the back row would make snide remarks, such as, "That one has shoe polish on it," which was an actual remark made at the Bushnell sale, referring to a 1794 cent that was dark black. The auctioneers ignored this stuff. In one of the auction sales of the time, an actual fistfight broke out over this type of thing.

BREEN: It broke out over a 1793 strawberry leaf cent.

FORD: It might have been a Lyman Low sale, but I'm not sure. In the early 1940s, Tom Elder told me about Lyman Low and his auction sales. Low had no auctioneer, and he would sit up there alone working the book. He had a bottle of gin, and every ten or fifteen lots, he would reach underneath the desk and take a shot from a bottle of gin. The further into the sale, the better it got, because Low couldn't read the bids of the mail bidders. So, if you stayed to the end of the sale, you could pick up some real good stuff, because Low would forget to protect the lots that he didn't have bids on. He'd be so full of gin that he would foul it up. I guess that the coin business was more human then.

The Bushnell sale is not the rarest Chapman, but its price is very high because of its reference value. Some of the plated, large-size Chapman sales that are very difficult to find, such as the Siedlecki, are next to worthless because they only have certain foreign coins, and only one or two United States coins of merit. Another invaluable catalogue is the Jenks sale. This sale is both rare with plates, and important as a research tool. That's why it commands the money it does.

Even if you try as I do, to stay on the straight and narrow path, and use a book for its reference value, it is easy to get off on tangents and start buying special editions, interleaved copies, presentation copies, and so forth. I find that I have a desire to own everything published, including books that I know I'll never use. Some years ago, when I was down at Harry Bass' house, he handed me something that looked like a telephone book and said, "Have you seen this one?" It was written some years ago by a nice lady in Florida, by the name of Jean Cohen, and it dealt with Lincoln cent errors. It was called, *The Encyclopedia of Fidology*, and it identified over seven thousand Lincoln cent errors, with over six thousand hand drawn illustrations. It shows cuds, rimbreaks, flyspecks, and who the hell knows what else. The whole book is full of Lincoln cent variables. Now, why do I have this book? I've never even opened it!

BASS: You're confessing right now to what you damned an hour ago — Bibliomania!!

FORD: I'll tell you why I bought that book. How do I know that someday I might not get a collection of twenty-two thousand Lincoln cent die varieties? I've got to be able to attribute them! But, that day won't ever come. I also have books on sales tax tokens, another topic that leaves me cold. I even have the book that someone wrote on medals issued during the bicentennial of Massachusetts. I just want to say that I have as complete a library on United States coins as is possible

for one to get. I really collect books as they come out, which means that I really collect knowledge.

GUEST: The question really is: Do you have a Bushnell catalogue without tobacco stains?

FORD: No. Back in 1951, the prolific Walter Breen worked for a short while for the American Numismatic Society. He started to make a list of United States Colonial coins, and the auctions that they appeared in. The idea, if carried to its ultimate, would result in an index of all the important items in American sale catalogues. This would be one hell of a job, but it's something that I hope we will see in the next ten or fifteen years. In other words, we should computerize the important items that have been sold at auction from roughly 1860 to date. This would primarily be of value in ascertaining how many specimens are known, and to a great extent, in tracing pedigrees. Dave Akers has done this in his series on United States gold coins.

It's unfortunate that we can't have some kind of a surtax in the industry on all of this wheeling, dealing, these million dollar deals, these hundred-thousand dollar coins that would draw off some of this money, and use it for basic research. We don't even have a list of American auction sales, although John Adams is working on such a book. If I understand it correctly, it will basically be a listing of all nineteenth century catalogues. He's going to list every catalogue, the date of the sale, the number of lots, who the cataloguer was, and so forth. For those dealers whose careers started in the nineteenth century, such as the Chapmans and Lyman Low, Adams' book will list their catalogues all the way to the end of their careers in the twentieth century.

MARGO RUSSELL: John, what are your thoughts about insuring books against loss by fire, or perhaps theft?

FORD: I'll tell you the truth. I'm building a new home, and one of the things that I'm concerned with is the protection of my library. The technology exists today, which was developed to protect computers, that will prevent fires in an airtight space. If the library room has windows, they are fixed windows that can't be opened; the door has neoprene gaskets that can be closed on rollers automatically in the event of fire. With heat or smoke detection equipment in the room, the slightest evidence of combustion will release a gas which will flood the room so that nothing can burn. This gas is non-toxic. This will protect the library. As far as insurance goes, I'm not a great believer in it, because you're dealing with items that cannot be replaced. Insurance gives you some money, but if I lived through the next fifty Kolbe sales, I could never replace what I have now. For example, I've got heavily annotated copies, such as Low's copy of Low, and J.N.T. Levick's copy of Low. They're the two foremost authorities on Hard Times tokens, and these copies couldn't be replaced. So, you insure to the extent that you can buy insurance, which is what I do, and you keep your fingers crossed. I think that protection is far more important than insurance.

GUEST: Are there many instances where burglars have taken numismatic books?

FORD: They only steal Gutenberg Bibles, or other well known rarities. Books are heavy, and burglars are not bright enough to know which are the right books to take. However, thefts from public libraries are another matter. The American Numismatic Society, for example, had problems up until a couple of years ago, with guys wearing heavy overcoats on warm days! They would go up to the ANS library, and take books out underneath their coats. Now, you have to sign in, and leave your coats and bags at the desk.

When I was with New Netherlands, the ANS librarian would call me up every two or three years and want to buy a copy of Miller/Ryder's *State Coinages of New England*, which was originally published by the ANS in 1920. It was the most popular book in the ANS library. Someone would steal a copy at least every eighteen months. To my knowledge, they must have bought ten copies from me alone in the twenty years I was with New Netherlands. Some people think that stealing books is like cheating insurance companies, or cheating your local banker. They think that it's all right. They borrow a book, forget about it, and then they keep it. It goes into their library. Maybe that's why collecting books becomes a mania. There are a lot of odd things connected with it.

One last point: I wanted to say something about bindings. There is an outfit in New York called Talas Library Service. Talas sells you anything that you could possibly need for the preservation and repair of a book. One of the greatest discoveries that I ever made was Talas. Through self-experimentation and talking with the people at Talas, I found ways to preserve and protect my leather bindings that were cracked or peeling. I originally started with Lexol, which both deacidifies the leather and puts neatsfoot oil and lanolin back into it. Then, I became more advanced. I bought the potassium lactate solution from Talas, and separately deacidified the leather, and then I put the oils back into it. Soon, I started buying ordinary oil pigments from art shops, and mixed it with linseed oil. I've got to the point now, that if you give me a crummy leather binding, I can restore it to the degree that it looks brand new. Talas also sells methyl acetate, which is the finest glue for repairing paper. I use it for repairing banknotes, too. It's fantastic! Then, they sell tissue for repairing torn pages in numerous different textures, colors, and shades. I've repaired pages in books, and I can't even locate the tear. A lot of my information came from Barrow, who also repairs books and documents. It's not called repair. It's called restoration. If it doesn't look like it's been repaired, it's been restored. If it looks like it's been repaired, it's been repaired. This is something that you do as a labor of love. Bookbinders do a so-so job, because they're strictly commercial. You can't pay a guy enough for the time and effort I spend on restoring a book.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I recently received my Fall-Winter issue of the *Asylum*, and want to congratulate you for this fine issue. To me, the highlight was the article, *Woodward vs. Frossard*, by John W. Adams. It was especially interesting to me because I have most of the catalogues mentioned and was able to get them out and check the parts referred to.

Those who enjoyed reading of this verbal battle would, I am sure, also love to read of the grading dispute between dealers Cogan and Mason, which appeared in the November and December issues of the *American Journal of Numismatics*. This subject is especially timely with the present controversy over the Mint State 60 through 69 grades.

Keep up the good work, and I shall look forward to receiving future issues of the *Asylum*.

Dave Hirt

While attending the ANA Convention in Cincinnati last August I picked up Vol. 1, No. 1 of a new publication "The Asylum." Reading the objectives of this publication, I noted they were very lofty. This new publication seemed to be something that I may have an interest in as I believe that I have made a contribution to the field of numismatic literature. I did not, however, "sign up."

At the recent convention of Early American Coppers Club, Inc., who incidentally publishes the leading numismatic publication "Penny-Wise," I was given a Xerox copy of the article "A Review of Half-Cent Literature" from No. 2 & 3 of "The Asylum." After careful reading of this article, I am of the opinion that the lofty objections [objectives ? ed.] so profoundly set forth in issue No. 1 are in fact so low that they are beneath whale dung on the ocean floor.

My conclusion is not based on the subject matter of the article, nor do I have any quarrel with the named author of the article, but it is the editors [sic] note which caused me to reach this conclusion. In my opinion the editor has breached the tenets [sic] of fair play with his note. He has continued a pattern of foul play which I and many many others have observed over the 10 year period since I took "pen in hand" to

do something about the 20 year hiatus for the publication of a standard reference on half cents. I am referring to the fact that from certain self-proclaimed and non-productive "numismatic literary scholars" there is a constant refusal to even acknowledge the publication of AMERICAN HALF CENTS in 1971!! The editor continues this charade in his note! Since many of his potential readers have knowledge of AMERICAN HALF CENTS, the editor attempts to justify his bias by stating that the article was written "circa 1966."

A careful reading of the article contradicts the editors [sic] caveat and leads the reader to the conclusion that either the editor is a liar in naming the author, or as an alternative the alleged [sic] author was a seer. This conclusion which we arrived at while at the EAC meeting is based on the following excerpt from the article on page 36.

"Ebenezer Gilbert completed a very uneven manuscript The Gilbert book long REMAINED (emphasis [sic] supplied) the standard reference, despite lacking a rational emission sequence, lacking reasonable historical material, lacking a usable rarity scale, and having inaccurate descriptions, typographical errors which in some cases destroyed the meaning of the sentences containing them, and plate errors."

In 1966 Gilbert was the standard reference on half cents, so how could the named author use the past tense for something that was in the future? His concluding paragraph on page 38 of the article makes it clear he did not consider the Bowers & Rudy [sic] work to be the standard reference on half cents.

We also noted that all the lacks and errors of the Gilbert book are not present in my book. If the editor of "The Asylum" were an editor with some knowledge rather than self-proclaimed expertise and not a liar and a bigot he would have indicated the existence of the PRESENT standard work on half cents. However, he did not do this. To do so would have been in keeping with the lofty objectives of "The Asylum" . . . The editor belongs to the depths to which these objectives have sunk. He should be there also as a coprophagist.

P.S. For a 1966 article the statement in regard to the LATE Joseph Brobston must be a "typographical error." If memory serves me correctly, his date of death was in 1972!

I'm sure this letter will never appear on the pages of "The Asylum" without editing!!

Roger S. Cohen, Jr.

The bibliographic article printed over my name in THE ASYLUM, Vol. 1, No. 2-3, is actually excerpted from my unpublished ms. on half cents, written 1953-56, completed 1956, revised 1965-66; the revision was not completed because of (among other things) prolonged serious illness, and renewed doubt

that I could ever bring it up to date. That reference to "the late Joseph Brobston" is from a penciled annotation made in 1972 when I learned of his death. It follows that when I wrote the quoted material, Roger Cohen's 1971 book was not even a gleam in someone's eye; and in 1972 I had not yet seen a copy, but if I had, I would not then have added it to this bibliographic section, as I believed my own book project dead and buried.

So much for coprophagy and similar indoor sports.

Now that the facts are in, the parties concerned may bury their hatchets wherever they please, so long as it is not anywhere in my anatomy; I have no part in this quarrel.

Yours in the name of truth,

Walter Breen

*In my opinion, American Half Cents is
what a coprophagist would wrap his lunch in!*

Editor

KATEN AUCTION SETS RECORD PRICES

Frank and Laurese Katen report that numismatic literature stole the spotlight in their 53rd sale dated April 24-25, 1981. Some of the highlights include: Adolph Cahn's auction sales No. 69 at \$90.00; Louis Ciani's sale of Oct. 30, 1920 at \$30.00. Other European auction sale catalogues of note include a large group of J. Schulman sales, lots 397 through 484 in the sale, which sold to a floor bidder for \$1,600.00.

Snowden's 1860 classic on the U.S. Mint collection fetched \$279.00 against an estimate of \$225.00. Heyden's bilingual classic on Italian orders and decorations brought \$110.00 and Loubat's well known work on American medals realized \$265.00.

American auction catalogues continued to be strong and much sought after. Mehl, Stack's, Kosoff and New Netherlands sales, report the Katens, fetched over 20 percent higher than in their previous sales. A large group of early sales, a continuation of the Wylie Hoard offering, sold mostly to floor bidders. A copy of the sale catalogue with a prices realized list may be obtained by sending \$2.00 to Frank and Laurese Katen, Post Office Box 4047, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20904.

BIBLIOMANIA BID BATTLE FOR BOOKS

by Jack Collins

It's hard to believe that two months have already elapsed since George Kolbe's now-legendary numismatic literature sale, which was held in conjunction with the Convention of International Numismatics in Los Angeles, June 12 and 13.

For me, it all began quietly on Saturday afternoon, May 22nd, when the mailman delivered a large parcel. After tearing away the envelope, I found what appeared to be a mint copy of a large-size Chapman catalogue. Upon closer inspection, I discovered that it wasn't a Chapman sale at all, but the current Kolbe numismatic literature auction sale.

It was an impressive catalogue, which closely approximated the original style of the famed Chapman brothers and was printed in a similar large format with full white, gilt-stamped covers; also included were eight full-color plates, the first ever employed for a numismatic literature auction catalogue. The text revealed a nearly overwhelming treasure trove of foreign and domestic delights for the bibliomaniac, all expertly described in meticulous detail by George Kolbe. Clearly, this would become the event of the decade, as there had never been an auction of numismatic literature of this magnitude.

As quickly as possible, I turned to the section containing my special interests, which are American auction catalogues. My eyes widened in pleasant surprise as I read through a wealth of listings of plated Chapman sales, mostly in pristine condition. As the run of Chapman catalogues constitutes my favorite series of collectibles in the American auction sales, I promptly started to hyperventilate, froth, and drool all at the same time. There were some choice Chapmans in this sale that I just couldn't live without having. At that point, I would have done almost anything to raise the sufficient cash needed to cover those lots that I wanted. I thought of selling the house, the car, my mother (all right, then how about two out of three?).

As the time grew closer and closer to the date of the sale, it was more and more difficult for me to get a decent night's sleep. Most of the time, I would toss and turn all night, or awaken abruptly at two or three in the morning in a cold sweat. The only way to pacify my unrest would be to turn on the light and reach for the Kolbe catalogue and peruse through the pages until I either drifted back to sleep, or the faint shafts of daylight would penetrate my bedroom. It was both pure heaven and hell at the same time.

Eventually, the symptoms of paranoia began to set in. I became more and more concerned about whether or not Harry Bass and Armand Champa were going to attend the sale, and if what they wanted would be the same things that I was after. I didn't know Harry Bass well enough to predict what he would do, but I knew what a foe Armand Champa could be from past experience. There had to be a way of keeping him from attending. In desperation, I thought of calling him several days before the auction and telling him that there had been an outbreak of Legionaire's Disease in the hotel, and the sale had been cancelled. I also plotted to have him paged just as the auction was about to start. Anything to lure him away.

On the first day of the sale, I arrived early to see if I could find out who was going to bid on what, and how much. Champa and I found each other and reluctantly exchanged greetings. Neither of us was really glad to see the other, at least not there. We cagily tried to pump each other for information, and both of

us feigned lack of interest in the Chapman catalogues, especially if they were going to realize astronomical prices.

At a few minutes after 7:00 p.m., George Kolbe introduced the auctioneers for the sale, Joe Lepczyk and Dave Hudson, both of whom had been recruited at the last minute in substitution for the ailing George Bennett. As the anticipation for this auction was extremely high, I fully expected GFK to welcome the audience with "Hello, Suckers!", which, alas, he didn't.

The opening session contained foreign and ancient numismatic literature that mostly brought respectable prices that were either at or above the estimates, but with rather limited floor activity, approximately sixty percent of the lots were awarded to mail bidders. Several highlights from that session included an anonymous manuscript on Oriental coins, from those of Alexander the Great to modern times, and brought \$2,600 on a \$1,500 estimate. A three-volume set of coins in the collection of the Biblioteque Nationale from Egypt, Spain, Africa, and the Orient, was hammered down for an impressive \$3,350.

While the first session may have seemed subdued, by comparison the final session on Saturday afternoon was full of fireworks. All of the competitors that I feared were there in full force: Harry Bass, Armand Champa, John Adams, Del Bland, and a number of other faces that were both known and unfamiliar. Everyone knew that this was going to be a bloodbath. I just hoped that my blood type wasn't among the others on the floor after the sale! Outwardly, I was the perfect picture of serenity, but my heart was pounding as though Buddy Rich was playing a gig in there. Now I know exactly how Mt. St. Helens felt just before the last major eruption.

A pair of small pamphlets by Daniel E. Groux, published in the mid-nineteenth century, soared to ten times their estimates! This was soon followed by a splendid copy of Crosby's masterpiece opus, *The Early coins of America*, at an astounding \$3,200, after which I feigned a surprised query, "Was that a reprint?", followed by a loud burst of laughter. A similar copy prompted another lively floor battle and realized \$2,500, and was quickly followed by still a third copy at \$1,400. By now, the audience was beginning to murmur. Yes, this was a sign of things yet to come!

Keith Kelman outfoxed several less courageous bidders and was rewarded with a pair of Maris' elephant folios of *A Historic Sketch of the Coins of New Jersey*, selling individually for \$3,500 and \$2,500 respectively. After a lengthy and somewhat heated bid battle between Messrs. Bass and Hanson, Denis Loring captured the prized, small fifteen-page treatise by Maris on large cents, that being the first monograph ever published on that series, and of which possibly fewer than ten copies in all survive from the original printing. That great rarity fetched \$4,500, or as Denis later said, \$300 a page!

More recent American classics included M.L. Beistle's, *A Register of Half Dollar Die Varieties*, a deluxe edition with photographic plates instead of the usually encountered halftones, and was bid to \$550, surpassing the estimate of \$375. Another deluxe reference work was A.W. Browning's, *The Early Quarter Dollars of the United States, 1796-1838*, which was one of only five copies prepared and signed by the publisher, Wayte Raymond. For several weeks before this auction, fellow bibliomaniac John Bergman could hardly talk of anything else in the sale, and he then became the determined successful bidder at an impressive \$3,200, more than double GFK's estimate in the catalogue.

A second edition of Lyman Low's, *Hard Times Tokens*, with fifteen photo-

graphic plates by Edgar Adams tipped into the text, resulted in an amazing \$2,100 final bid, which was exactly seven times GFK's estimate for the lot. In the periodicals section, a complete set of the *American Journal of Numismatics*, uniformly handsomely bound in red half morocco, brought \$6,300, which delighted its purchaser as "the bargain of the sale," claiming that he was fully prepared to pay double that amount. His lack of competition on the lot was, apparently, due to the wrong timing on the part of another buyer who decided to step out into the corridor to converse with a friend. Oh, well, this happens in the best of sales — and this was one of the best!

A complete set of *The Numismatist* from 1894 through 1944, which was formerly in the library of Ed and Kenneth Lee, was knocked down by the auctioneer for \$3,200.

When the Chapman catalogues came on the auction block, I was a basket case. All throughout the auction, a knot was building inside my stomach, until it seemed that I was actually enduring the special effects from the horror movie, *Alien*.

The first of the Chapmans' sales, a small-size plated catalogue of October, 1879, opened at \$1,750, more than three times GFK's estimate, and sold after a single floor bidder raised the ante to \$1,800. The Richard B. Winsor sale, with nine of the ten plates, went for \$1,500, which was equally far in excess of the \$450 estimate.

The John G. Mills catalogue with fourteen photographic plates, long considered to be one of the more "common" of the large format Chapman sales, still managed to bring \$1,750 on a \$750 estimate. Next came an explosive price for the important Harlan P. Smith catalogue, which contained fourteen fine photographic plates, and quickly rocketed to \$4,200.

A beautiful copy of the famed Matthew A. Stickney collection, bound in original white cloth and boards and contained twenty perfect or "unspotted" plates, brought more than double its estimate when it realized \$3,600. When the Captain Andrew Zabriskie catalogue, which featured numerous pioneer gold coins and contained thirteen plates, opened at a meager \$1,000, the room came alive. It seemed for a few moments that everyone wanted to get into the act, as bidders' hands all shot into the air at the same time. For a while, there was only a sea of hands that, from the rear of the room, looked vaguely like picket fences. The catalogue was finally sold for a bid of \$4,600.

Other Chapman sales with plates that sold for more than double or triple GFK's estimates include the Lambert sale of 1913 at \$3,600, the George Earle catalogue of 1912 at \$3,900, the William F. Gable collection of 1914 at \$4,200, the George M. Parsons sale of 1914 at \$4,900, and the sale of the Bascom and Brown collections of 1915 at \$2,800.

A magnificently bound copy of the John Story Jenks sale, with forty-two original photographic plates, which was Henry Chapman's magnum opus, brought a reasonable \$4,100 to an appreciative bidder, who later resold it for several thousand dollars profit. The Dr. Henry W. Beckwith collection of large cents, with seven photographic plates, and bound in white leather with the buyers' names annotated, sold for \$3,000.

However, the auction's star performer was the 1920 catalogue by S.H. Chapman of the W.H. Hunter collection of Indian peace medals, with nine original photographic plates. Although not mentioned by GFK in the catalogue, this copy was possibly the finest surviving example of that sale, which some

researchers consider to be the rarest of all of the large plated Chapman catalogues. The bidding opened at \$5,750, nearly four times the estimate, and was advanced without hesitation by Armand Champa to \$6,000. The war was on between us, with Champa and myself trying to knock each other out of the ballpark with increments that alternated between \$500 and \$1,000. As the bidding reached the \$9,000 level, Champa reluctantly caved in, and I was awarded the lot, which was accompanied by a round of applause. To the amusement of most of those within earshot, and with tongue-in-cheek, I quickly asked the auctioneer, "Oh, what lot were we on?"

The price for the W.H. Hunter catalogue shattered all previous records for an American book or catalogue sold at public auction!

With bids such as these for the Chapman sales, the \$2,000 earned by the catalogue of Thomas Elder's 1910 sale of the Peter Mougey collection, and the \$1,150 realized for a presentation copy in leather of B. Max Mehl's W.F. Dunham collection almost appear anticlimatic.

P.T. Barnum was right when he said, "There's a sucker born every minute!" Well, judging from the amount of bidders attending the sale, I'd say that there was about three-quarters of an hour sitting there!

After that session, most of the bidders adjourned to a reception given by George Kolbe, where some licked their wounds, others tallied their wins or losses, and a few others were treated for shock. As for myself, well, I won a few and lost a few. My original "shopping list" for the sale contained about four times as many lots as I actually got. However, the sad part was that I spent on those few what I had intended to spend on all of them!

From any standpoint, the sale was a phenomenal success, having grossed \$271,765, which is the highest total ever recorded for a numismatic book auction. GFK reports that he has no more regular copies of the catalogue available, but a deluxe edition in white leather is presently being prepared for subscribers at \$85. Copies of the Prices Realized for the sale may be obtained by sending \$5 to George Frederick Kolbe, 23881 Via Fabricante, No. 511, Mission Viejo, California 92691.



SOME OF THE ATTENDEES AT THE KOLBE RECEPTION

Left to right: Harry Bass, Alan Meghrig, Doug Bird, Cal Wilson, Denis Loring, Fritz Weber (partially hidden), Jack Collins, Jon Hanson, Keith Kelman, George Kolbe, Jesse Patrick, Armand Champa, John Bergman.

THE INCOMPLET COLLECTOR

by Forrest W. Daniel

The development of a personal numismatic research library usually begins a number of years after the average person has begun his collection. The latest price catalogues of his current interest are, of course, always kept up to date. Acquisition of a Max Mehl price list or another obsolete volume can be the beginning of the search for books of more specialized knowledge. It is interesting just what will turn up.

How often has the numismatic writer searched for a reference he has heard of several times (one that isn't in the ANA Library) to have it turn up after several years in an auction catalogue. Joy of joys, "Now I can finish that article." His mail bid is a conservative, but reasonable, amount above the cataloguer's estimate. But horror of horrors, some unscrupulous person has submitted an outrageously high bid and taken the book on the next raise. The only hope for the unsuccessful bidder is that there will be one less competitor when another copy surfaces.

It is not the books one doesn't have that make the Incomplet Collector, they are the odds and ends of complete sets bought when they were available, in the simple trust that someday the missing volume(s) would show up to join their lost brethren.

There is no difficulty in locating a complete set of *Diccionario De La Moneda Hispanoamericana*, by Humberto F. Burzio. The trick is to find a lone copy of Volume 3 to go with the first two volumes already on the shelf.

An interesting purchase made at a New York auction gallery was the unbound signatures of *Some Account of the Bills of Credit or Paper Money of Rhode Island*, by Elisha R. Potter and Sidney S. Rider, 1880. It was discovered later that the third 12-page signature has only one sheet, as a result pages 13, 14, 15, 16 and 21, 22, 23, 24 are missing. The odds of locating those pages before binding can be considered fairly slim.

A book sale fiasco at a rural New York auction barn produced Volume III *Annals of the Coinage of Britain*, by Rev. Rogers Ruding, 1817. Even though the other volumes were not in sight, an Incomplet Collector would not leave that numismatic treasure in such pedestrian surroundings.

Given the choice of an illustrated numismatic book printed in the 17th Century and another, Volume 2 of an 18th Century set, which will the Incomplet Collector choose? A fan through each of the books showed the later-printed volume had unusual printing features, so it was the one selected. The illustrations were a key interest in *Catalogue D'Une Collection De Medailles Antiques, Faite Par La Csse Douair. De Bentinck, Nee Csse D'Aldenburg, Dame De Varel, Kniephausen Et Doorwerth, Seconde Partie*, Amsterdam, MDCCLXXXVII — they were engraved.

Space was left in the printed text of the Catalogue to impress the engraved copper plates which vary in size from 22 x 42 mm. to 62 x 124 mm. A number of illustrations also occur at the end of the book, including 21 for Volume 1. Six of the engravings are signed and dated by a variety of inscriptions. The engraver was C. Weisbrod of Hamburg; one of the signatures indicates he also did the drawing, "C. Weisbrod del a sc 1781 H". All of the signed engravings are dated 1781.

Greek types were used for Greek inscriptions on the coins described, but complicated monograms, symbols and ligatures on local coinage were drawn into the text by hand. A semi-swastika from a coin of Gaza is an example. One Punic inscription was hand-lettered. The word "illisible" was hand-lettered twice, indicating that an inscription and a monogram were illegible on the coin described. In two places words, or parts of words, were covered with an opaquing compound and corrections hand-lettered over the errors.

Aaron Feldman admonished us to buy the book before the coin. The Incomplete Collector suggests we do not pass up the misplaced volume just because that set is incomplete; we will experience the same exhilaration in anticipation of a find the beginning collector feels when only a few holes are left to fill in a Whitman penny (cent) board. In the meantime, the full knowledge of a generous portion of scholarship is conveniently at hand for immediate use.

THE REPRINT – DON'T KNOCK IT

by Alfred Szego

For more than one reason even numismatic bibliophilea should take a second look at available reprints.

A weak link in our area is. . . .paper! Yes, the stuff that books are made of. Librarians are mostly of the opinion that our cherished books are destined to simply turn into dust. Even our rag paper may only last about a millenium or so.

This may not deeply trouble bibliophiles who count their expected life span in decades but yet can cause all of us some problems now.

To begin with, sometime around 1870 sulphite process paper came into widespread use. Several numismatic classics were printed on that paper here and abroad. For some reason those books had varying rates of decay, probably depending on climate or storage. Often the pages are so fragile that they can only be turned with extreme caution, if at all.

Obviously reprints of these books ensures their contents continued existence and are valuable contributions to numismatics.

Another justification for the reprint is the difficulty of locating so many rare old classics. Even the well-heeled have to compete and spend much time and energy searching for them.

Finally, wide distribution of these important reference works makes them available to the average numismatist, greatly enhancing the hobby and increasing his or here knowledge.

Paper deterioration reaches its peak in many books and periodicals published between 1890-1915. Books published before the sulphite process was introduced were printed on rag paper and even those from the 16th century hold up very well. After about 1915 paper was gradually improved, becoming fairly durable and relatively longer lasting.

Perhaps publishers could produce small numbers of each of their editions on rag fibre content paper or each work be microfilmed in some duplication. Thus, possibly, future generations would have the benefits of today's reprints as well as modern original works.

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It is very difficult and even nearly impossible to purchase certain very rare numismatic reference books. Some only appear at auctions once every 30 years. This impedes research. While the magnificent library of the American Numismatic Society is nearly a complete one, it is very costly and inconvenient to spend weeks and months there. Besides, there are a few books even they do not have.

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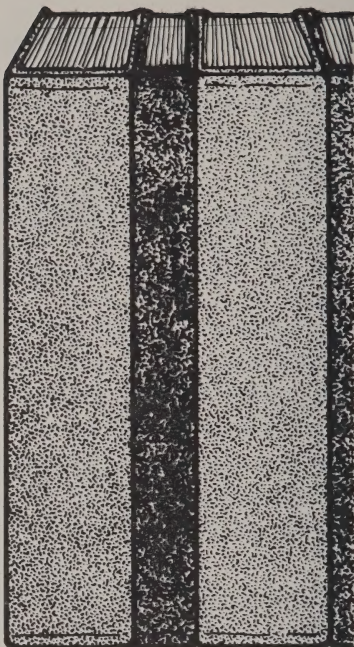
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